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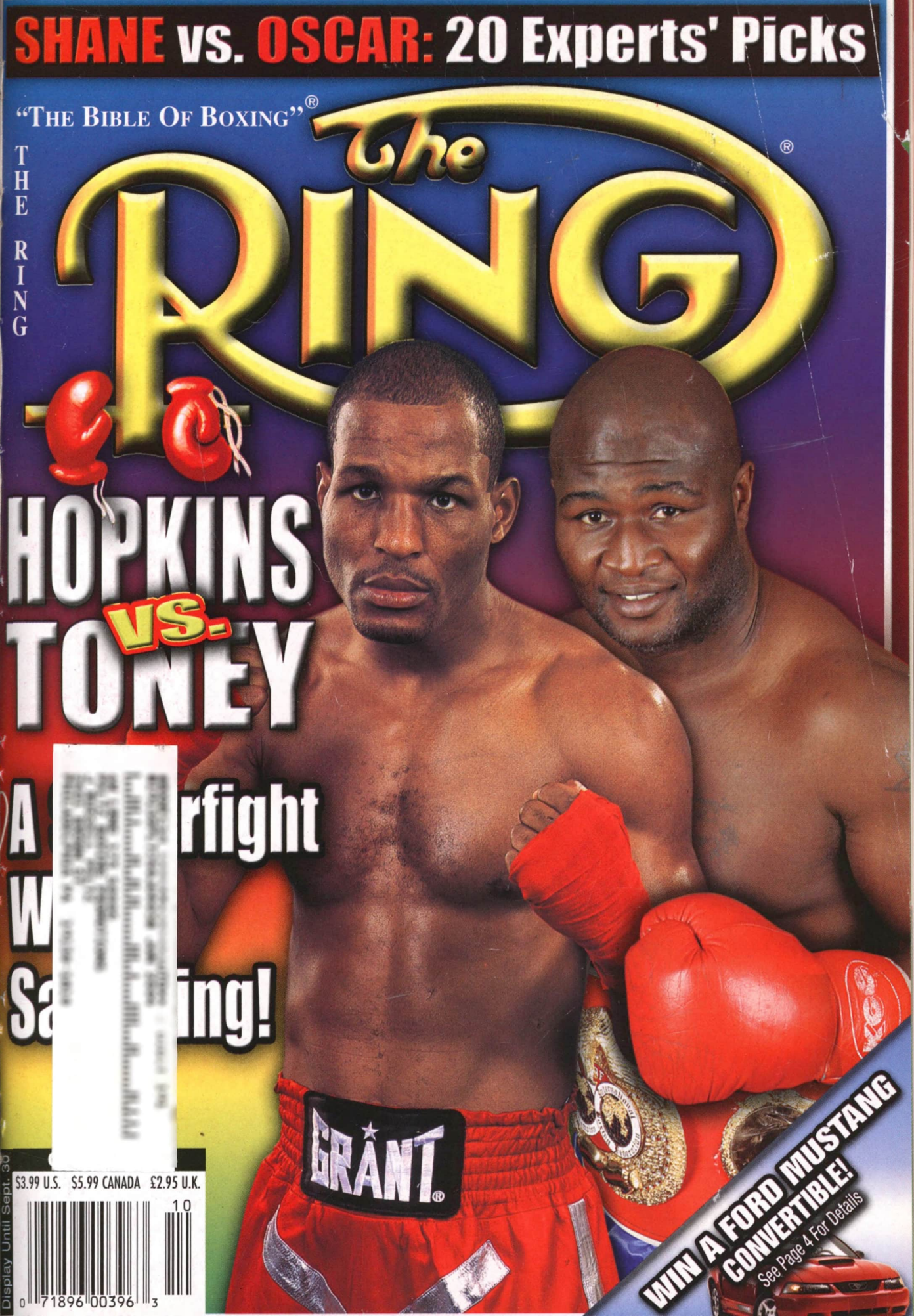

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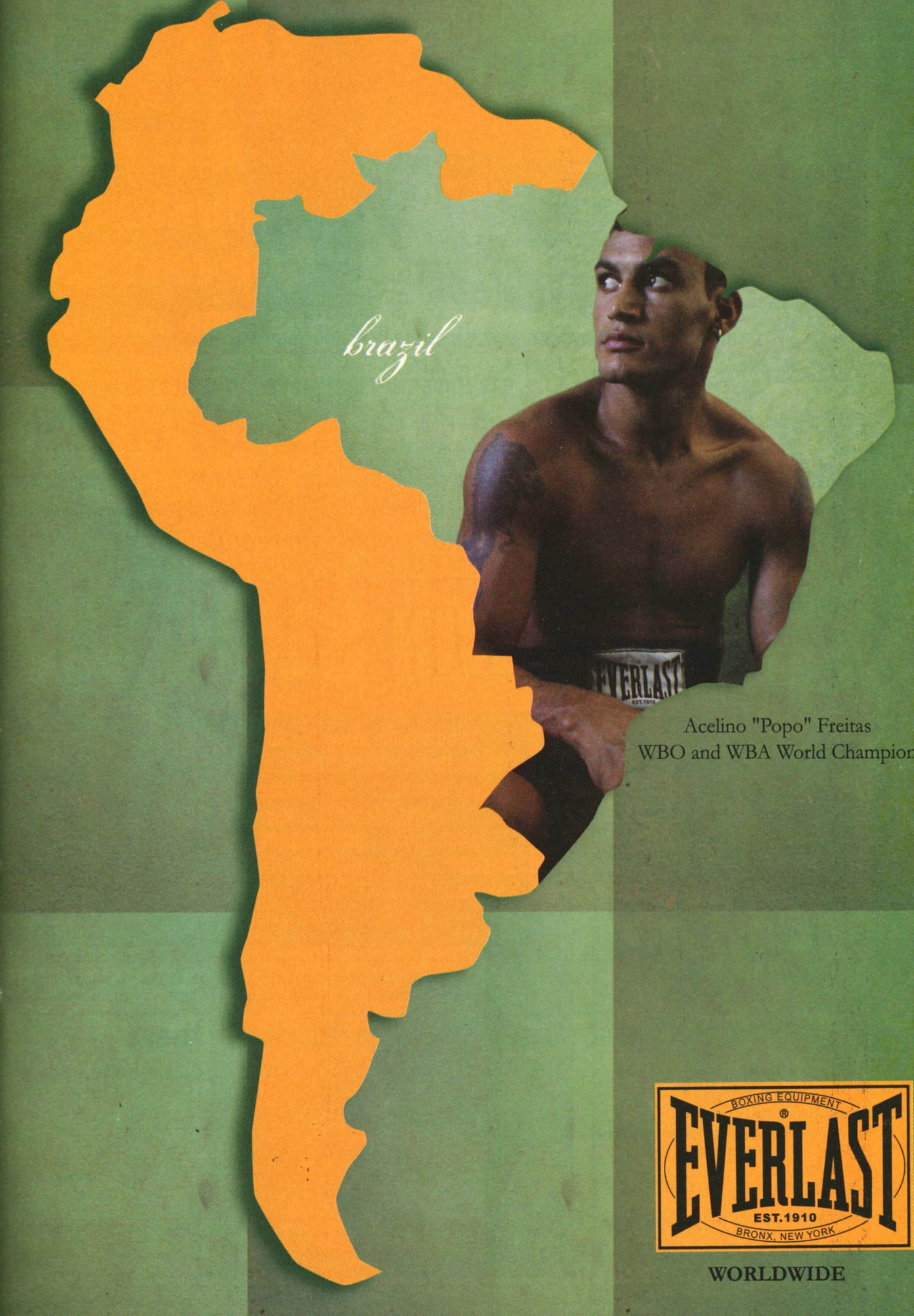

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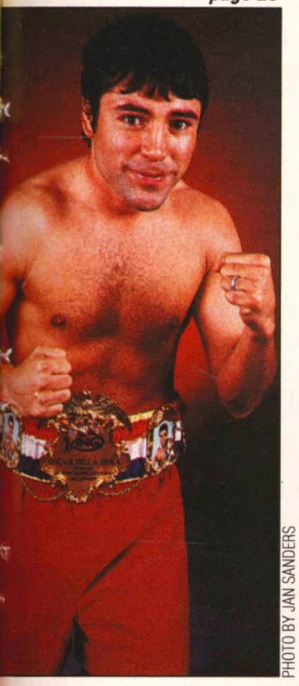

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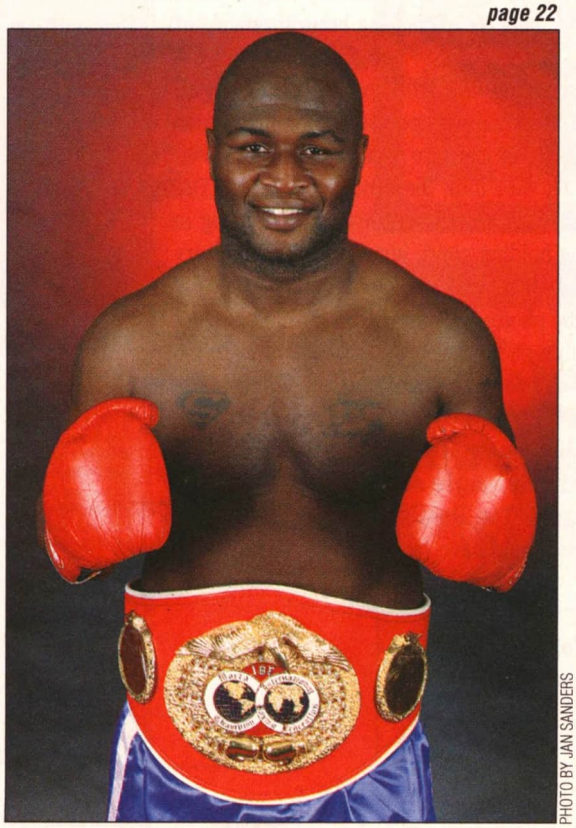

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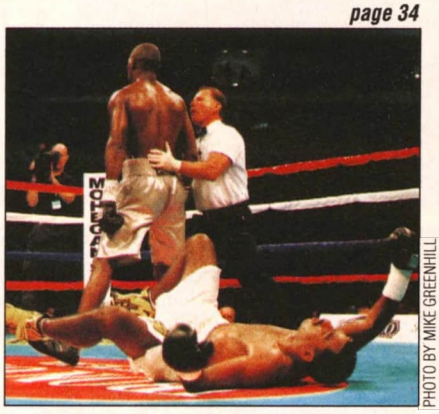

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RINGSIDE

After spending a day at Lennox Lewis' Pocono Mountains training camp in early-June, I'm more convinced than ever that most people have the wrong impression of the heavyweight champion of the world.

While few celebrities are precise duplicates of their public persona, Lewis is more misunderstood than most. It's not anybody's fault really, nobody is guilty of character assassination or anything like that. And while the media hasn't exactly gone out of its way to probe too profoundly into the subject, you can't blame them either. Lewis simply isn't the type of individual whose personality shines through at a press conference, or the sort of guy who provides insightful sound bites when somebody sticks a microphone in his sweaty face moments after a big fight.

One of the biggest misconceptions about Lewis is that he's aloof, the sort of guy who looks disdainfully down his nose at us lesser mortals. The truth of the matter is that Lennox isn't stuck up at all; he's shy. And as any behavioral scientist will tell you, shy people are frequently misconstrued as being standoffish. But once Lewis is comfortable with you and the surroundings, he's down to earth, friendly, and willing to go out of his way to be accommodating.

Being shy often goes hand-in-hand with being sensitive, which certainly seems to be the case with Lewis. Criticism that would elicit a laugh or a curse from most fighters seems to bruise Lennox's psyche. This doesn't make him any less of a man, just one who feels things a little deeper than most. Fighters with less complicated temperaments and those more at ease dealing with the public are relatively easy to read. But Lennox has never quite found the right formula for expressing himself outside of the ring.

The Lewis I recently had the pleasure of spending time with was the sort of guy all fans should be able to relate to. Instead of a self-centered egomaniac, I found a man who was interested enough in the other boxers in camp to watch them spar, even though he had something to do elsewhere. He also took the time to chill with THE RING crew prior to the formal photo shoot, casually discussing his career, boxing in general, and world affairs. This wasn't a king holding court, just a man, albeit a very rich and famous one, enjoying the company of others with similar interests.

In order for his body to look its best for the photos, the champ ran through a series of exercises to pump up his muscles, even though he'd already trained earlier in the day. Once the photo session started, Lewis was cooperation personified, happily flexing for the camera, switching from a smile to a snarl on cue, and goofing around with everybody between takes. Relaxed in a familiar setting with people he trusts, Lennox seemed to be having as much fun as everybody else, maybe more.

It's a shame that we couldn't have taken all THE RING's loyal readers with us, because if we could have, I'm positive Lewis would have far more fans the next day than he's ever had before.

Nigel Collins
Editor-in-Chief

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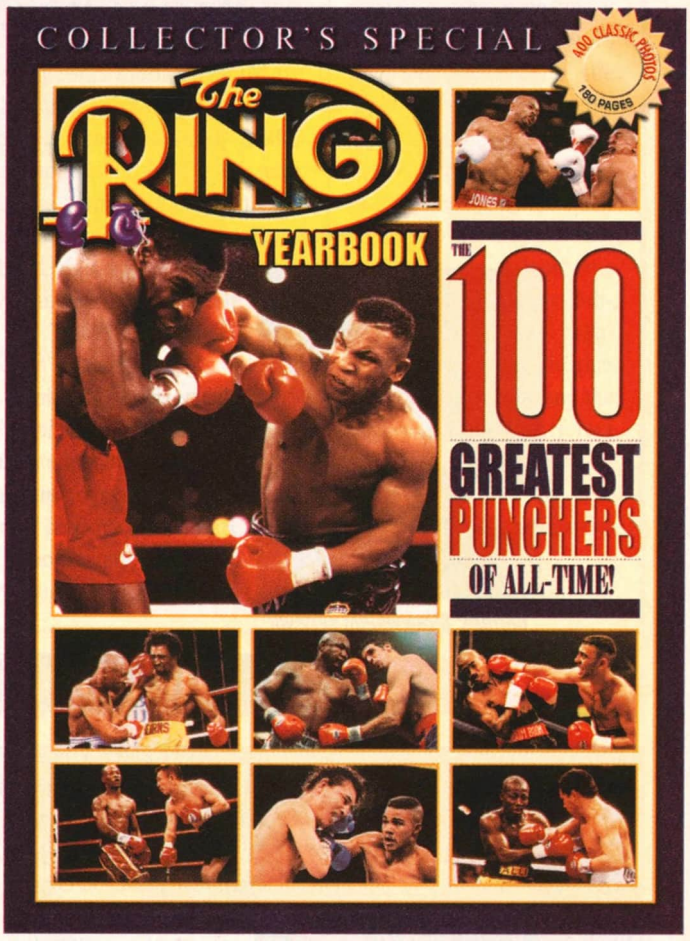

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ROUND ONE

BARRERA ON THE ROAD TO RECOVERY

Miguel Barrera came into his March 31 fight in Tijuana against Edgar Cardenas with the IBF mini flyweight belt, an undefeated record, and THE RING's number-one ranking at 105 pounds. About 40 minutes later, he had none of the above—and came perilously close to losing much more than that. Thankfully, as of press time, Barrera was making a miraculous recovery from his frightening knockout loss, and it appeared his life was not in any danger.

Barrera led journeyman Cardenas on all three scorecards through nine rounds, but Cardenas connected with a right hand in the 10th that sent the defending titleholder to the canvas. Barrera tried to rise, but quickly collapsed, and was stretchered out of the ring and taken to nearby Hospital del Prado.

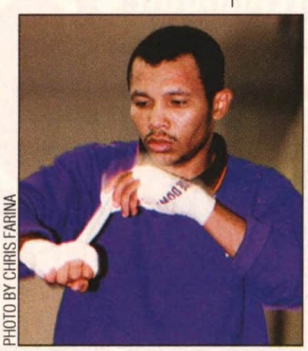


PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

Barrera: Strawweight survivor

X-rays revealed a blood clot on the left side of Barrera's brain, and doctors performed emergency surgery. It didn't take long to see that the surgery had been successful, as Barrera was alert and coherent less than 24 hours later, reportedly recognizing the people around him and asking who won the fight. The next day, the 24-year-old fighter was taken out of intensive care.

"He's awake, smiling, and giving the thumbs-up sign," said Lee Samuels, publicist for Barrera's promoter, Top Rank, three days after the fight. "He's conscious and he's communicating, so thank God, it looks like he's going to be okay. He's really a sweet person, a very, very charismatic guy. Our hearts are all out to him."

—Eric Raskin

IS THE DiBELLA-WILLIAMS SPLIT PERMANENT?

The first fighter THE RING team encountered on a late-May visit to Lennox Lewis' Pocono (Pennsylvania) Mountains training camp was Ricardo Williams, who was about to leave.

"Hi, Ricky. Where are you going?"

"I've got contract problems; I'm going home."

With that, the 2000 Olympic silver medalist climbed into an SUV and drove away.

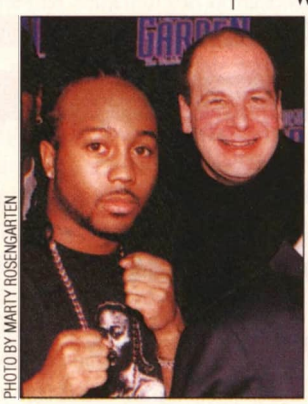


PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

Williams and DiBella during happier times

Later that day, the news was all over the Internet: Promoter Lou DiBella, who forked over a record $1.4-million bonus to sign Williams, had terminated his contract with the 22-year-old prospect.

Ostensibly, the dispute was over money. DiBella, who claims to have invested an additional $600,000 since signing Williams, wanted to renegotiate the purse structure for the next few fights. The promoter felt that following Williams' upset loss to Juan Valenzuela in February, the fighter needed to rebuild in off-TV fights and on ESPN, and that a reduction in pay was necessary during that process. Williams balked and bolted camp.

The reason Williams was in camp with Lewis in the first place was to work with Lewis' trainer, Emanuel Steward, whom DiBella had hoped would be able to instill some much-needed discipline. Superficially, it seemed that Williams had buckled down under Steward, but sources close to the situation claimed Williams was sneaking junk food late at night.

Besides cutting his losses, one gets the sense that DiBella also wanted to set an example and send a message to any other fighters under contract to him. But he also left the door open a crack, just in case Williams changes his mind about renegotiating.

"I thought [Ricky] was going to be great," DiBella told *USA Today*. "He still can be, but it's up to him whether or not he can put everything together. "

—Nigel Collins

PEACOCK PARTNERSHIP PROMISING

The rising ratings of NBC's *Budweiser Boxing Series* this past spring—the network's first foray into live boxing since 1991—has created a strong likelihood that the series will be expanded this fall. The ratings for the series, shown on consecutive Saturdays in May (May 3, May 10, May 17), grew from 1.2 million households (and a four percent share of the viewing market) the first weekend to 1.4 million for the series finale, featuring Edelmiro "Tiger" Martinez vs. Nate Campbell.

In fact, the Martinez-Campbell fight drew a series-high 1.9 million households (and a five share) during the last half-hour of the telecast. The audiences for the shows were larger than for almost any recent boxing telecasts on cable, and the ratings ranked in the middle of the pack among weekend sports programs (the finale actually drew a better rating than an NHL Conference Finals game the same day). Main Events, which promoted the series, would like to renew its contract with NBC, and as of press time, all indications pointed toward NBC feeling the same.

"All the signs are positive, and here at NBC we liked what we saw," network spokesman Mike McCarley said. "The production also got better. We got smoother and smoother as each week went by. [Matchmaker] Carl Moretti put on some really great fights, and they were very compelling and made for good TV. The sponsors liked what they saw. There is a great chance it could happen again. We met with Main Events the week after the Campbell fight and talked about the future."

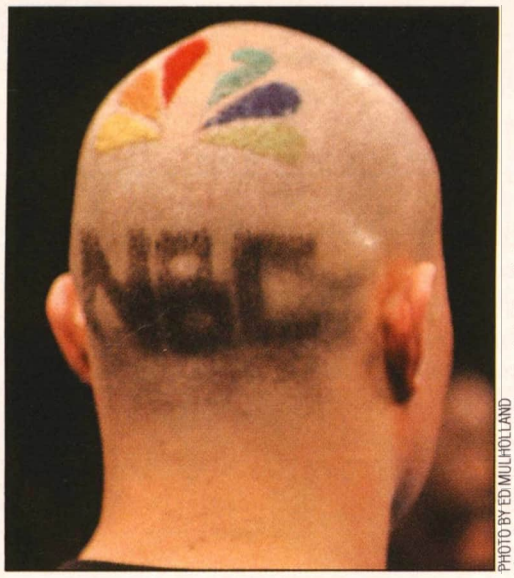


PHOTO BY ED MULHOLLAND

Kermit Cintron sported a colorful hairstyle for his network debut

Kevin Monaghan, vice president of new business development at NBC Sports, has said publicly that the network will probably air at least one fight in September, with the possibility of carrying boxing on NBC regularly after that. Monaghan said that not only did NBC make money, but so did Main Events and the Spanish-language network Telemundo, which aired different fights from the same cards on each of those Saturday afternoons.

"There was some real advertiser interest, which was not something we saw 12 years ago," Monaghan said.

—Joe Santoliquito

ALI AS POSTER-BOY

Back in the 1970s, when Jeff Julian was just beginning his career as a documentary photographer, he was a regular visitor at Muhammad Ali's Deer Lake, Pennsylvania, training camp. Even though Julian was in his early-20s and an unknown, Ali took an interest in his work.

"He invited me into his private cabin and looked at my photographs," recalled Julian. "He didn't just shuffle through them, he took his time and discussed them with me. That was the thing that really impressed me about Ali, the way he treated the common folk."

Now, a quarter of a century later, Julian is repaying Ali's kindness by helping promote the opening of the Muhammad Ali Center being built in the champ's hometown of Louisville, Kentucky. Julian has collaborated with Tursack Printing to produce a poster from a photo he took of Ali in '78, while Ali was training for his rematch with Leon Spinks.

"The photo has always been one of my favorites," said Julian, who is currently working on a documentary about the International Boxing Hall of Fame in Canastota, New York. "He looks so regal and confident, almost like some kind of African god."

PHOTO BY WALES HUNTER

Muhammad and Lonnie Ali and nephew Corey Williams display the poster

"We are thrilled with this generous donation," said Michael J. Fox, president/CEO of the Ali Center, which is due to open in 2004.

Anybody wishing to purchase one of a limited edition of 350 prints signed by Ali should phone (502) 584-9254. Each signed poster costs $300 (plus shipping and handling), with the funds going the Ali Center.

—Nigel Collins

TV FIGHTS OF THE MONTH

DATE	WINNER/LOSER	NETWORK	DIVISION	SIGNIFICANCE	MATCHUP	RESULT
5-8-03	Bradley Pryce W 10 Ivan Kirpa	Show	jw	C-	C+	D
Junior welter is the best division in the business; who let these guys in?						
5-8-03	Gary Lockett W 10 Yuri Tsarenko	Show	jm	C	B-	C-
Lockett gets revenge; Tsarenko's late rally not enough to overcome early deficit						
5-9-03	Jameel McCline KO 3 Charles Shufford	ESPN2	h	B	B-	B
McCline and Michael Grant should rematch for the title of Most Emotionally Fragile Giant Heavyweight						
5-9-03	Fernando Montiel KO 2 Ruben Sanchez-Leon	Telef	b	B+	C+	C+
Montiel the guy to watch in his division; if he were bigger you'd already be talking about him						
5-10-03	Francisco Bojado KO 6 William Adamyan	NBC	jw	B-	B+	B+
Bojado's not the guy we thought he was, but it's hard not to like a big puncher who bleeds						
5-10-03	Juan Diaz W 10 Eleazar Contreras	NBC	l	B-	B	A-
Diaz just good enough and just flawed enough to make a heck of a TV fighter						
5-16-03	Joe Morales W 10 Antonio Cermeno	ESPN2	jl	C	C+	C+
Hey, where the hell is Freddie Norwood?						
5-17-03	Kermit Cintron KO 1 Luis Rosado	NBC	jm	B-	C+	C+
Cintron is a pure puncher; let's hope that when he's ready to step up Ricardo Mayorga is still around						
5-17-03	Edelmiro Martinez D 10 Nate Campbell	NBC	jl	B+	B+	B+
We thought Martinez won outright; and as a broadcaster, Raul Marquez makes a hell of a worn-out junior middleweight						
5-17-03	Jeff Lacy KO 2 Anwar Oshana	Show	sm	B-	C	C
A can't-miss combination: a puncher and perfect matchmaking; let's see Lacy against a guy who can move and punch back						
5-17-03	Sharmba Mitchell W 12 Ben Tackie	Show	jw	A	B+	B
It is a testament to the goodness of fighters everywhere that Jim Gray still has a full set of teeth						
5-17-03	Jermain Taylor KO 4 Nicholas Cervera	HBO	m	B	B+	B
In the time it's taken Taylor to go from novice to very hot middleweight prospect, Keith Holmes has fought once						
5-17-03	**Leonard Dorin D 12 Paul Spadafora**	**HBO**	**WBA/IBF l**	**A**	**A-**	**A-**
Who's teaching Spadafora how to slip right hands, Wayne McCullough?						
5-22-03	Ruslan Chagaev KO 3 Zak Graham	Show	h	C	C+	C-
We get the sense that Chagaev is going to outwill some top-15-type heavyweights						
5-22-03	Kuvanych Toygonbayev W 10 Andrey Tsurkan	Show	jm	C+	B	B+
Tsurkan remind anyone else of a young, slightly less insane-looking Christopher Walken?						
5-22-03	Jesse James Leija KO 4 Adan Casillas	HBO L	jw	B-	D-	C
Don't get excited; against this level of competition, Leija could go on forever, but so could a lot of guys						
5-23-03	Chris Smith KO 6 Grover Wiley	ESPN2	w	B-	C-	C
Max Kellerman overhyping an interesting but obviously flawed New York fighter? We're shocked						
5-23-03	O'Neil Bell KO 11 Kelvin Davis	ESPN2	c	B+	B+	B
Isn't it illegal for a fighter to hit the other guy when he's down? Even in Oklahoma?						
5-30-03	Kassim Ouma W 12 Angel Hernandez	ESPN2	jm	B+	A-	B-
Ouma's a good, strong kid, but he's nowhere near ready for Winky Wright						
6-3-03	Emanuel Clottey KO 10 Muhammad Abdullaev	ESPN2	w	B-	B	B+
You'd think the first thing a guy would teach his non-English-speaking fighter is what "10" means						
6-3-03	Heriberto Ruiz W 10 Clarence Vinson	ESPN2	jf	B-	B+	C+
This has been coming for a while; Vinson's not a world-class caliber prospect						

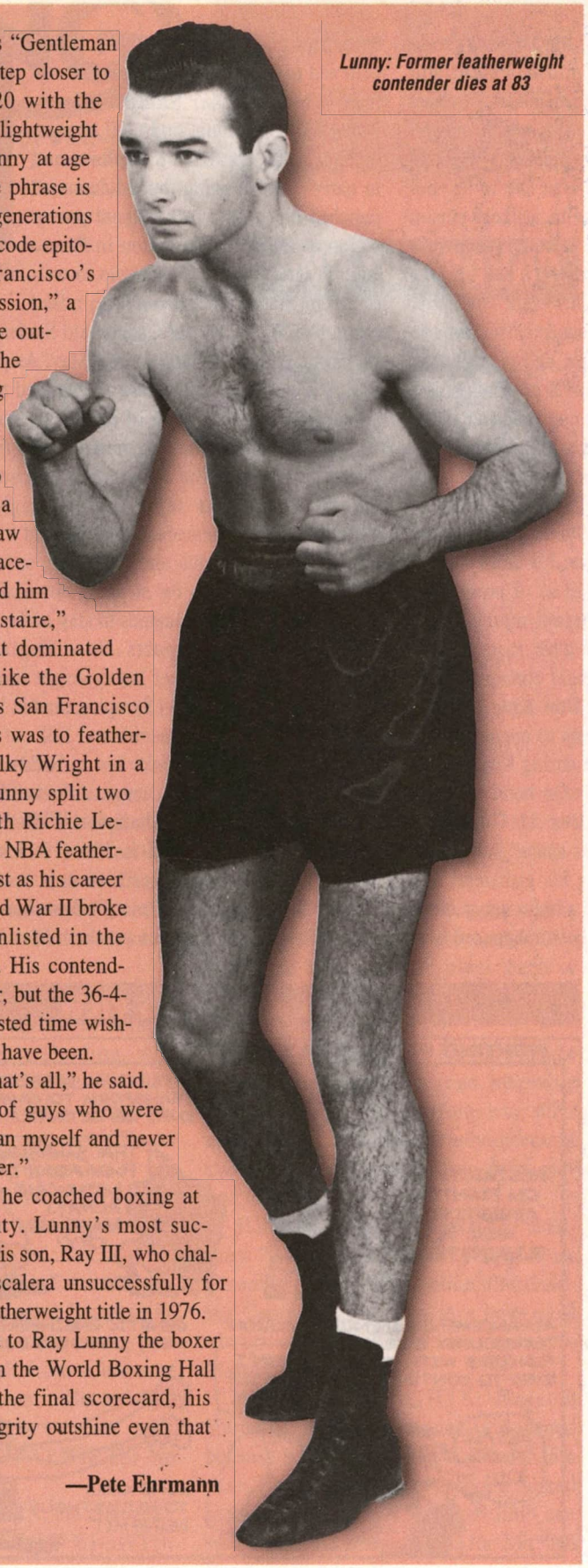
Category Explanation: "Significance"—The importance of the bout to the division and the fighters' futures; "Matchup"—The quality of the fighters and the prefight determination of how their styles will mesh; "Result"—How the bout turned out, from the viewer's perspective.

(World/Alphabet title fights in **bold** type)

Division key: h—heavyweight; c—cruiserweight; lh—light heavyweight; sm—super middleweight; m—middleweight; jm—junior middleweight; w—welterweight; jw—junior welterweight; l—lightweight; jl—junior lightweight; f—featherweight; jf—junior featherweight; b—bantamweight; jb—junior bantamweight; fl—flyweight; jfl—junior flyweight; s—strawweight

Network key: PPV—Pay-Per-View; Show—Showtime; FOXSN—Fox SportsNet; Uni—Univision; Telef—Telefutura; Telem—Telemundo; HBO L—HBO Latino

RAY LUNNY, 1919-2003



Lunny: Former featherweight contender dies at 83

The rare genus "Gentleman Boxer" moved a step closer to extinction May 20 with the passing of former lightweight contender Ray Lunny at age 83. Nowadays the phrase is oxymoronic, but generations ago it was a strict code epitomized by San Francisco's "Pride Of The Mission," a man as impressive outside the ropes as he was spellbinding between them.

Undefeated in his first 33 pro fights, Lunny was a top West Coast draw with moves so graceful THE RING called him "a fistic [Fred] Astaire," and a left jab that dominated most opponents like the Golden Gate Bridge does San Francisco Bay. His first loss was to featherweight titlist Chalky Wright in a non-title fight. Lunny split two non-title goes with Richie Lemos, who wore the NBA featherweight belt. But just as his career was peaking, World War II broke out and Lunny enlisted in the U.S. Coast Guard. His contending days were over, but the 36-4-3 Lunny never wasted time wishing for what might have been.

"It's just life, that's all," he said. "Besides, I think of guys who were more deserving than myself and never got that break, either."

After the war, he coached boxing at Stanford University. Lunny's most successful pupil was his son, Ray III, who challenged Alfredo Escalera unsuccessfully for the WBC super featherweight title in 1976.

It's a testament to Ray Lunny the boxer that he ended up in the World Boxing Hall of Fame. But on the final scorecard, his character and integrity outshine even that left jab.

—Pete Ehrmann

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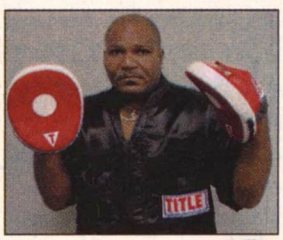

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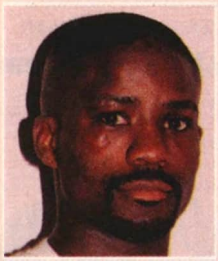
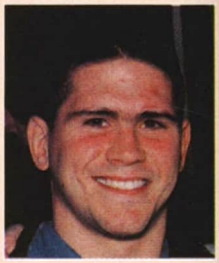
OUTSIDE THE ROPES



Johnston: Deadbeat Dad doin' time

In a Des Moines, Iowa, courtroom in late-May, former middleweight and super middleweight titleholder **Michael Nunn** pled guilty to conspiring to distribute cocaine from February 1993 to August 2002. Nunn was due to be sentenced in August, with a likely prison term of at least five years ... Nunn isn't the only Iowa boxer who's had a rough month. Super middleweight contender **Antwun Echols** suffered a minor gunshot wound to his armpit in a drive-by shooting in Davenport in late-May, and just 10 days later, he was arrested and charged with unlawful possession of a firearm after being stopped at an early-morning roadside safety check. Initially expected to be a felony charge, the crime of possessing a handgun without a valid firearms identification card was later reduced to a misdemeanor and should not affect Echols' career ... Former lightweight king **Stevie Johnston** has not complied with court orders to keep up on his child-support payments, and was therefore in a Denver jail as of press time. Johnston has four children with three different mothers, and could face six months in jail in each of the three cases ... The undisputed king of the courtroom, heavyweight champ **Lennox Lewis**, filed a $400-million lawsuit against **Don King** in early-May, claiming the promoter used death threats to prevent Lewis from organizing a rematch with **Mike Tyson** during King's well-publicized meetings with Tyson in a Manhattan hotel room ... Former world flyweight champion **Walter McGowan** of Scotland is in a sad state. McGowan, 61, was spared jail time in late-May after being convicted of battering his girlfriend in a drunken rage, but he instead has been sent to a brain injury clinic and is unlikely to ever be released. He has been diagnosed with dementia and Korsakoff's psychosis, believed to be the result of heavy drinking ... Matchmaker **Sampson Lewkowicz** filed criminal and civil charges against promoter **Murad Muhammad** in early-June, alleging that Muhammad punched him in the face without provocation at the IBF convention in Puerto Rico in late-May ... Thumbs up to welterweight **Kermit Cintron**, who raised more than $2,500 for the Cancer Aid Society with his first-round knockout of **Luis Rosado** in mid-May. As part of the "Knockout Cancer Campaign," fans were encouraged to pledge either a flat amount or a specific sum of money for each punch landed by Cintron. Hopefully, the next time Cintron fights, he'll have time to land more than the 18 punches he connected with against Rosado ... Former super middleweight contender **Dana Rosenblatt**, 31, announced his retirement in late-May, citing difficulty lining up fights and increasing susceptibility to injuries and cuts as his reason for stepping down after a 10-year, 37-1-2 (23) career. Rosenblatt intends to stay in the fight game as a commentator for Fox Sports New England ... **Alexander Miroshnichenko**, a super heavyweight bronze medalist for the Soviet Union at the 1988 Olympics, died in late-May at the age of 38 after an apparently accidental fall out of his apartment in Kazakhstan. Miroshnichenko lost to **Riddick Bowe** in Seoul and had a brief 21-1 (15) pro career ... Former South African welterweight and middleweight champion **Willie Ludick** died of cancer in mid-May at age 62. Ludick, 36-9 (19), lost by fifth-round kayo against **Curtis Cokes** in April '68 in his only world title shot ... Basketball hall of famer **Dave DeBusschere**, a former co-owner of THE RING, died of a heart attack on May 14 at age 62.



Rosenblatt: "Dangerous Dana" retires

THE PUNCHLINES

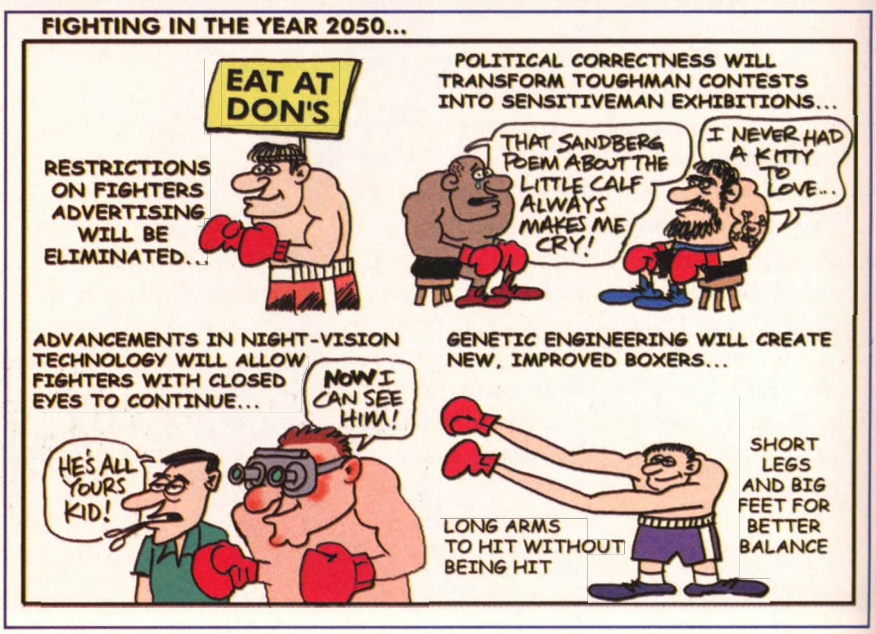
"Emanuel Steward says Bernard Hopkins is Old School. I think he's more like Old Fool. But if he wants to fight, I'm here."

—James Toney

"Mike hit me with a really good shot. It almost knocked me out. I got a little light headed and things went dark on me for a bit."

—Trainer Freddie Roach, confirming rumors that Mike Tyson accidentally clipped him while they were working the pads prior to the Cliff Etienne fight

AL KRATZER'S VIEW



"THE BIBLE OF BOXING"

RATINGS ANALYSIS

(For period ended June 5, 2003)

POUND-FOR-POUND

1. **ROY JONES** Heavyweight/Light Heavyweight
2. **BERNARD HOPKINS** Middleweight
3. **MARCO ANTONIO BARRERA** Featherweight
4. **OSCAR DE LA HOYA** Junior Middleweight
5. **KOSTYA TSZYU** Junior Welterweight
6. **ERIK MORALES** Featherweight
7. **FLOYD MAYWEATHER** Lightweight
8. **RICARDO MAYORGA** Welterweight
9. **LENNOX LEWIS** Heavyweight
10. **VERNON FORREST** Welterweight

HEAVYWEIGHTS: No changes.

CRUISERWEIGHTS: O'Neil Bell moves from eighth to seventh on the strength of his kayo of Kelvin Davis. Ezra Sellers (seventh last issue) slips to eighth to accommodate Bell's advancement.

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS: Glencoffe Johnson jumps aboard at number three after beating Eric Harding, who held that position last issue. Harding dips to fourth, which pushes everybody rated below him down one spot. Clinton Woods (10th last issue) drops out.

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS: Syd Vanderpool replaces inactive Manuel Siaca at number 10.

MIDDLEWEIGHTS: Erland Betare (eighth last issue) departs because he hasn't fought in more than a year. Jermain Taylor, fresh from a kayo of Nicholas Cervera, debuts in Betare's old slot.

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS: No changes.

WELTERWEIGHTS: No changes.

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS: Ben Tackie (eighth last issue) exits after his loss to Sharmba Mitchell, which allows Diobelys Hurtado and Ricky Hatton to move up one place each to eighth and ninth, respectively. Omar Weis is back at number 10.

LIGHTWEIGHTS: Leonard Dorin jumps from fourth to second following his draw with Paul Spadafora, who stays at number three. Dorin's advancement shoves Steve Johnston down from second to fourth.

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS: Edelmiro "Tiger" Martinez replaces Nate Campbell in the 10th position after holding Campbell to a draw in a bout most observers felt should have gone to Martinez.

FEATHERWEIGHTS: Naseem Hamed (fourth last issue) is dumped because he hasn't fought in more than a year. Naz' exit allows everybody ranked below him in the last issue to climb one spot each, and makes room for Michael Brodie at number 10.

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS: No changes.

BANTAMWEIGHTS: Heriberto Ruiz, who handed U.S. Olympian Clarence Vinson his first loss and also holds a win over Ricardo Vargas, replaces Vargas in the 10th position.

JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS: No changes.

FLYWEIGHTS: No changes.

JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS: No changes.

STRAWWEIGHTS: Miguel Barrera (first last issue) suffered a brain injury during his knockout loss to Edgar Cardenas and has been removed. Barrera has made a rapid recovery, and while it's highly unlikely that he'll ever fight again, THE RING would certainly consider his past status and accomplishments should he somehow make a comeback. Meanwhile, Cardenas is aboard at number three, while Jose Aguirre moves from second to first, and Noel Arambulet moves from third to second.

POUND-FOR-POUND: No changes. ■

THE RING RATINGS

For Period Ended June 5, 2003

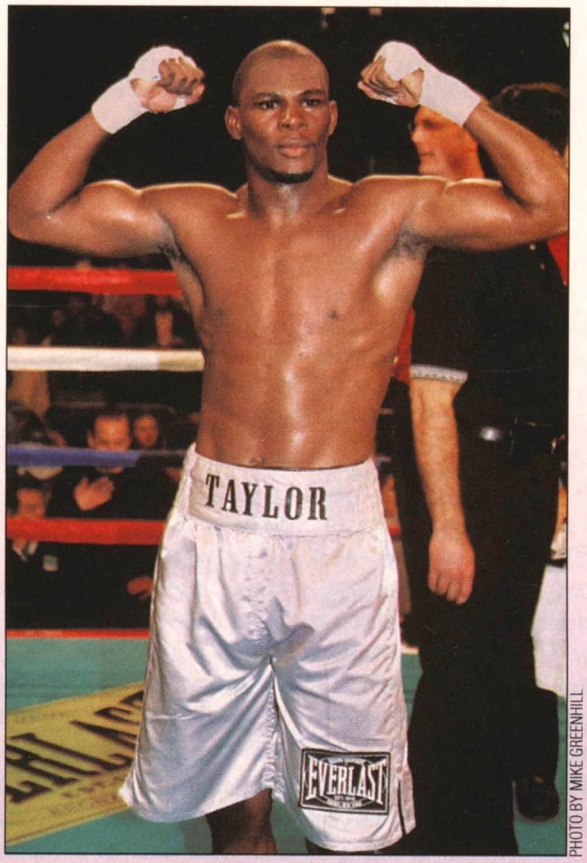


PHOTO BY MIKE GREENHILL

Jermain Taylor crashes the middleweight rankings at number eight

How Our Ratings Are Compiled

Fighters recognized as champions by THE RING are rated at the top of their division, with the top 10 contenders listed below.

Championship vacancies can be filled in one of two ways: by unifying all three alphabet titles in a division; or by winning a box-off between THE RING'S number-one and number-two contenders, or, in certain instances, a box-off between our number-one and number-three contenders.

The only three occasions when a fighter will lose his championship status are when he retires, moves to another weight division, or is defeated in a championship bout.

Ratings By The Editors
Records By Fight Fax Inc.

HEAVYWEIGHTS
Weight Unlimited

Champ: LENNOX LEWIS
England 40-2-1 (31)

1. **CHRIS BYRD**
Flint, MI 36-2 (20)
2. **CORRIE SANDERS**
South Africa 39-2 (29)
3. **ROY JONES**
Pensacola, FL 48-1 (38)
4. **EVANDER HOLYFIELD**
Atlanta, GA 38-6-2 (25)
5. **DAVID TUA**
New Zealand 42-3-1 (37)
6. **HASIM RAHMAN**
Baltimore, MD 35-4-1 (29)
7. **MIKE TYSON**
Catskill, NY 50-4 (44)
8. **WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO**
Ukraine 40-2 (37)
9. **JOHN RUIZ**
Chelsea, MA 38-5-1 (27)
10. **VITALI KLITSCHKO**
Ukraine 32-1 (31)

JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 154 pounds

Champ: OSCAR DE LA HOYA
Los Angeles, CA 36-2 (29)

1. **WINKY WRIGHT**
St. Petersburg, FL 45-3 (25)
2. **FERNANDO VARGAS**
Oxnard, CA 22-2 (20)
3. **JAVIER CASTILLEJO**
Spain 55-5 (37)
4. **DANIEL SANTOS**
Puerto Rico 26-2-1 (20)
5. **SHANE MOSLEY**
Pomona, CA 38-2 (35)
6. **KASSIM OUMA**
W. Palm Beach, FL 17-1-1 (11)
7. **VERNO PHILLIPS**
Aurora, CO 35-9-1 (18)
8. **ALEX GARCIA**
Mexico 21-0 (20)
9. **BRONCO McKART**
Monroe, MI 45-5 (29)
10. **ALEX BUNEMA**
Dallas, TX 21-3-2 (12)

FEATHERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 126 pounds

Champ: MARCO ANTONIO BARRERA
Mexico 57-3 (40)

1. **ERIK MORALES**
Mexico 44-1 (33)
2. **JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ**
Mexico 40-2 (32)
3. **DERRICK GAINER**
Pensacola, FL 39-5-1 (24)
4. **SCOTT HARRISON**
Scotland 19-1-1 (9)
5. **MANUEL MEDINA**
Mexico 60-13 (27)
6. **JOHNNY TAPIA**
Albuquerque, NM 52-3-2 (28)
7. **FRANKIE TOLEDO**
Paterson, NJ 42-6-1 (17)
8. **LEHLO LEDWABA**
South Africa 34-2-1 (22)
9. **WILLIAM ABELYAN**
Glendale, CA 22-4-1 (11)
10. **MICHAEL BRODIE**
England 34-1 (22)

JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 122 pounds

Champ: PAULIE AYALA
Ft. Worth, TX 34-2 (12)

1. **MANNY PACQUIAO**
Philippines 36-2-1 (27)
2. **OSCAR LARIOS**
Mexico 48-3-1 (33)
3. **SALIM MEDJKOUNE**
France 41-3-1 (21)
4. **JOSE LUIS VALBUENA**
Venezuela 22-2-1 (12)
5. **ISRAEL VAZQUEZ**
Mexico 34-3 (25)
6. **WILLIE JORRIN**
Sacramento, CA 29-1-1 (13)
7. **JOAN GUZMAN**
Dominican Republic 18-0 (14)
8. **OSAMU SATO**
Japan 26-2-2 (15)
9. **YODDAMRONG SITHYODTHONG**
Thailand 33-1-1 (18)
10. **NEDAL HUSSEIN**
Australia 30-1 (17)

BANTAMWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 118 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **RAFAEL MARQUEZ**
Mexico 29-3 (27)
2. **VEERAPOL SAHAPROM**
Thailand 41-1-1 (29)
3. **TIM AUSTIN**
Cincinnati, OH 25-1-1 (22)
4. **JOHNNY BREDAHL**
Denmark 53-2 (26)
5. **CRUZ CARBAJAL**
Mexico 23-11-1 (19)
6. **TOSHIAKI NISHIOKA**
Japan 23-3-2 (14)
7. **PETE FRISSINA**
Tarpon Springs, FL 26-3-1 (15)
8. **SILENCE MABUZA**
South Africa 14-0 (13)
9. **GENARO GARCIA**
Mexico 28-4 (16)
10. **HERIBERTO RUIZ**
Mexico 27-2-2 (13)

CRUISERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 190 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **JAMES TONEY**
   Ann Arbor, MI 66-4-2 (42)
2. **VASSILIY JIROV**
   Kazakhstan 31-1 (27)
3. **JEAN-MARC MORMECK**
   France 29-2 (21)
4. **WAYNE BRAITHWAITE**
   Guyana 19-0 (16)
5. **JOHNNY NELSON**
   England 42-12-2 (28)
6. **GUILLERMO JONES**
   Panama 29-2-2 (22)
7. **O'NEIL BELL**
   Atlanta, GA 21-1-1 (20)
8. **EZRA SELLERS**
   Washington, D.C. 26-5 (24)
9. **VIRGIL HILL**
   Bismarck, ND 48-4 (23)
10. **SEBASTIAN ROTHMAN**
    South Africa 16-1-2 (12)

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 175 pounds

Champ: ROY JONES
Pensacola, FL 48-1 (38)

1. **ANTONIO TARVER**
   Orlando, FL 21-1 (17)
2. **DARIUSZ MICHALCZEWSKI**
   Germany 48-0 (38)
3. **GLENCOFFE JOHNSON**
   Miami, FL 39-9-1 (27)
4. **ERIC HARDING**
   Philadelphia, PA 21-3-1 (7)
5. **MEHDI SAHNOUNE**
   France 24-0 (21)
6. **JULIO GONZALEZ**
   Huntington Beach, CA 33-1 (22)
7. **MONTELL GRIFFIN**
   Chicago, IL 44-4 (29)
8. **BRUNO GIRARD**
   France 42-3-2 (7)
9. **LOU DEL VALLE**
   Bronx, NY 31-3-1 (21)
10. **GEORGE JONES**
    Paterson, NJ 19-2 (13)

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 168 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **SVEN OTTKE**
   Germany 30-0 (6)
2. **JOE CALZAGHE**
   Wales 35-0 (28)
3. **ANTWUN ECHOLS**
   Davenport, IA 29-4-1 (26)
4. **MARKUS BEYER**
   Germany 27-1 (11)
5. **ERIC LUCAS**
   Canada 36-5-3 (13)
6. **BYRON MITCHELL**
   Ozark, AL 25-2-1 (18)
7. **CHARLES BREWER**
   Philadelphia, PA 39-9 (27)
8. **MADS LARSEN**
   Denmark 44-1 (37)
9. **ANTHONY MUNDINE**
   Australia 18-1 (14)
10. **SYD VANDERPOOL**
    Canada 33-2 (22)

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 160 pounds

Champ: BERNARD HOPKINS
Philadelphia, PA 42-2-1 (31)

1. **WILLIAM JOPPY**
   Washington, D.C. 34-2-1 (25)
2. **HOWARD EASTMAN**
   England 37-1 (34)
3. **ROBERT ALLEN**
   Atlanta, GA 35-4 (26)
4. **TITO MENDOZA**
   Panama 27-4 (20)
5. **SERGEY TATEVOSYAN**
   Russia 18-3 (13)
6. **HASSINE CHERIFI**
   France 34-6-1 (20)
7. **RODNEY JONES**
   Lafayette, LA 29-3 (18)
8. **JERMAIN TAYLOR**
   Little Rock, AK 16-0 (12)
9. **CARL DANIELS**
   St. Louis, MO 48-4-1 (30)
10. **JULIO GARCIA**
    Miami, FL 24-1 (10)

WELTERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 147 pounds

Champ: RICARDO MAYORGA
Nicaragua 24-3-1 (22)

1. **VERNON FORREST**
   Atlanta, GA 35-1 (26)
2. **ANTONIO MARGARITO**
   Mexico 28-3 (19)
3. **CORY SPINKS**
   St. Louis, MO 31-2 (11)
4. **THOMAS DAMGAARD**
   Denmark 32-0 (25)
5. **MICHELE PICCIRILLO**
   Italy 37-2 (23)
6. **MANUEL GOMEZ**
   Mexico 21-10 (16)
7. **ANDREW LEWIS**
   Guyana 22-2-1 (20)
8. **ELIO ORTIZ**
   Venezuela 25-4 (19)
9. **JAWAID KHALIQ**
   England 21-1-1 (13)
10. **HECTOR QUIROZ**
    Mexico 37-7-1 (30)

JR. WELTERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 140 pounds

Champ: KOSTYA TSZYU
Australia 30-1 (24)

1. **SHARMBA MITCHELL**
   Washington, D.C. 52-3 (30)
2. **ZAB JUDAH**
   Brooklyn, NY 28-1 (21)
3. **ARTURO GATTI**
   Jersey City, NJ 35-6 (28)
4. **DeMARCUS CORLEY**
   Washington, D.C. 28-1-1 (16)
5. **VIVIAN HARRIS**
   Brooklyn, NY 22-1-1 (16)
6. **MICKY WARD**
   Lowell, MA 38-12 (27)
7. **OKTAY URKAL**
   Germany 32-1 (10)
8. **DIOBELYS HURTADO**
   Miami, FL 35-3-1 (23)
9. **RICKY HATTON**
   England 32-0 (24)
10. **OMAR WEIS**
    Los Angeles, CA 36-4-3 (16)

LIGHTWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 135 pounds

Champ: FLOYD MAYWEATHER
Grand Rapids, MI 30-0 (20)

1. **JOSE LUIS CASTILLO**
   Mexico 46-6-1 (42)
2. **LEONARD DORIN**
   Canada 21-0-1 (7)
3. **PAUL SPADAFORA**
   Pittsburgh, PA 36-0-1 (14)
4. **STEVE JOHNSTON**
   Denver, CO 35-2-1 (17)
5. **JUAN LAZCANO**
   El Paso, TX 32-2-1 (24)
6. **ANGEL MANFREDY**
   Gary, IN 41-6-1 (30)
7. **ARTUR GRIGORIAN**
   Uzbekistan 36-0 (22)
8. **ALEJANDRO GONZALEZ**
   Mexico 49-5-1 (33)
9. **JULIEN LORCY**
   France 53-3-2 (38)
10. **JUAN GOMEZ TRINIDAD**
    Puerto Rico 23-2 (16)

JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 130 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **ACELINO FREITAS**
   Brazil 33-0 (30)
2. **JOEL CASAMAYOR**
   Miami, FL 29-1 (18)
3. **JESUS CHAVEZ**
   Mexico 39-2 (28)
4. **STEVE FORBES**
   Las Vegas, NV 23-1 (6)
5. **YODSANAN NANTHACHAI**
   Thailand 39-2-1 (32)
6. **PHILLIP NDOU**
   South Africa 30-1 (29)
7. **SIRIMONGKOL SINGMANASSAK**
   Thailand 40-1 (23)
8. **CARLOS HERNANDEZ**
   Bellflower, CA 39-3-1 (24)
9. **CASSIUS BALOYI**
   South Africa 28-1 (16)
10. **EDELMIRO MARTINEZ**
    Bronx, NY 20-2-1 (9)

JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 115 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **MASAMORI TOKUYAMA**
   North Korea 28-2-1 (8)
2. **ALEXANDER MUNOZ**
   Venezuela 23-0 (23)
3. **FERNANDO MONTIEL**
   Mexico 26-0-1 (20)
4. **LUIS PEREZ**
   Nicaragua 21-1 (14)
5. **MARTIN CASTILLO**
   Mexico 23-1 (14)
6. **FELIX MACHADO**
   Venezuela 22-4-1 (11)
7. **MAURICIO PASTRANA**
   Colombia 30-3-1 (20)
8. **LUIS BOLANO**
   Colombia 38-0 (28)
9. **OSCAR ANDRADE**
   Mexico 29-22-1 (16)
10. **KATSUSHIGE KAWASHIMA**
    Japan 23-2 (16)

FLYWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 112 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **ERIC MOREL**
   Madison, WI 32-0 (18)
2. **PONGSAKLEK WONJONGKAM**
   Thailand 47-2 (25)
3. **IRENE PACHECO**
   Colombia 27-0 (20)
4. **MZUKISI SIKALI**
   South Africa 27-4-2 (16)
5. **HAWK MAKEPULA**
   South Africa 20-2 (13)
6. **MALCOLM TUNACAO**
   Philippines 14-1-2 (10)
7. **PETER CULSHAW**
   England 23-1-1 (12)
8. **OMAR NARVAEZ**
   Argentina 13-0-1 (7)
9. **DAMAEN KELLY**
   Ireland 18-1 (8)
10. **LORENZO PARRA**
    Venezuela 20-0 (16)

JR. FLYWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 108 pounds

Champ: ROSENDO ALVAREZ
Nicaragua 32-2-1 (21)

1. **JORGE ARCE**
   Mexico 34-3-1 (25)
2. **BEBIS MENDOZA**
   Colombia 28-2 (23)
3. **PICHIT SIRIWAT**
   Thailand 26-2 (12)
4. **NELSON DIEPPA**
   Puerto Rico 19-2-2 (11)
5. **YOSAM CHOI**
   South Korea 24-2 (13)
6. **MELCHOR COB-CASTRO**
   Mexico 66-9-4 (30)
7. **JOSE VICTOR BURGOS**
   Mexico 36-13-2 (21)
8. **MHIKIZA MYEKENI**
   South Africa 17-1 (6)
9. **FAHLAN SAKKREERIN**
   Thailand 49-3-2 (19)
10. **KERMIN GUARDIA**
    Colombia 34-2 (21)

STRAWWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 105 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **JOSE AGUIRRE**
   Mexico 29-1-1 (18)
2. **NOEL ARAMBULET**
   Venezuela 19-2-1 (10)
3. **EDGAR CARDENAS**
   Mexico 30-10-2 (16)
4. **CHANA PORPAOIN**
   Thailand 49-2-2 (17)
5. **KEITARO HOSHINO**
   Japan 23-9 (6)
6. **JOMA GAMBOA**
   Philippines 32-7-2 (22)
7. **ROBERTO LEYVA**
   Mexico 21-2-1 (18)
8. **DANIEL REYES**
   Colombia 29-1-1 (24)
9. **JUAN PALACIOS**
   Nicaragua 13-2 (9)
10. **ISAAC BUSTOS**
    Mexico 19-6-3 (9)

RYAN OUT LOUD

By Jeff Ryan

WITH "KID" GLOVES

As bad decisions go, that injustice on the Pitt campus in May certainly wasn't the kind of flagrant fleecing that gives the press corps acid reflux problems or makes state senators clamor for boxing reform. Nonetheless, the judges who denied WBA lightweight king Leonard Dorin the chance to hyphenate his alphabet title designation by adding the letters, I-B-F, to it, should henceforth be known as the Pittsburgh Stealers.

In what qualifies as Exhibit A when it comes to showing why one guy should never fight in the other's hometown, the Steal Curtain was unwilling to relieve undefeated Paul Spadafora of the title he narrowly, but unquestionably, lost that night when he abandoned his counterpunching style in favor of a more aggressive attack. So we were left with a draw. To the equally unbeaten Dorin, that tie must have seemed like kissing your sister's sweaty feet.

Judges Gary Merritt and Guillermo Perez, who scored the fight a draw and a 115-114 win for Spadafora, respectively, should have taken a closer look at all of Spaddy's body art. The third judge, Pat Russell, had it 115-113 for Dorin, while I had it 116-113 for the out-of-towner. Yeah, "The Pittsburgh Kid" may be covered with more ink than the dinner check at Butterbean's favorite diner, but the IBF lightweight title belt is *not* permanently tattooed around Spadafora's waist. Call me a killjoy, but Spadafora-Dorin, while very entertaining, didn't gain me a newfound respect for the IBF titlist. In fact, it made me more frustrated with him, and his cheerleaders in the Pittsburgh media, than ever before.

Let's start with the Spadafora "phenomenon" in Steel Town. First of all, despite having been home to the likes of Billy Conn, Harry Greb, Fritzie Zivic, and Michael Moorer, Western Pennsylvania has never gotten many goose bumps over the Sweet Science. The area is football country, first and foremost. Hockey's Penguins are a very, very distant second in popularity. Baseball's Pirates are so unappreciated that people don't go to their games even though they've done the one thing that's supposed to guarantee fan support these days: build a new stadium. Boxing? It's far behind the Pirates.

PHOTO BY STEVE MATTEO/HBO

Was Spadafora's decision to slug with Dorin stupid?

This story has been told before in this column, but it illustrates how much respect the fight game has always gotten in Pittsburgh. While at college in the Pittsburgh area during the late-'70s and early-'80s, I'd watch network

sitcoms at night and see promos all week long for an upcoming fight on the weekend. Often, though, I'd turn on ABC, CBS, or NBC that Saturday afternoon only to discover that the local affiliate had replaced a great matchup with an old movie or some other insipid programming due to a lack of local interest in the bout. (The genius who made the decision to pre-empt Matt Franklin-Marvin Johnson II in 1979 better hope he never runs into me in a dimly lit parking lot.)

And Spadafora is such a Pittsburgh sensation that the biggest fight of his career drew only 5,200 people to the Petersen Events Center instead of 15,000 to the Mellon Arena. Of course, now that the world has seen him against Dorin, the Pittsburgh press tells us, that will surely change in the future. After all, the Steel Town writers said, "international acclaim" will come Spadafora's way now that he's had his "defining moment," a bout in which he "lost nothing and gained everything." Gee, you'd think it would be hard to type while holding a megaphone in one hand and pom-poms in the other.

PHOTO BY STEVE MATTEO/HBO

There have been worse decisions, but Dorin was robbed

"When he would catch me with a couple of shots, I wanted to get revenge instantly," Spadafora said. "I gained respect in the boxing world because I finally let people know what I already knew, that I could fight like that."

Lucky us. And, hey, it only took Spadafora 37 fights before he unleashed his inner brawler! What Spadafora failed to mention is that of all the times to abandon his boring, jab-and-slide style, he picked the one time he could have really used it. If this was his defining moment, it defines him as a numbskull. He nullified his height advantage by staying inside and trading punches with Dorin. Where was the logic in ignoring the game plan of trainers Jesse Reid and Tom Yankello? In his most important battle, Spadafora showed the ability to adapt all right, adapt to exactly what he shouldn't have been doing.

Forgive me, my former neighbors in "The Golden Triangle" and its environs, but Spadafora still has a long way to go to convince me that he's anything more than a limited talent who has benefited from a weak era in lightweight history. With his local fan following, tattoos, and track record of getting up from knockdowns and wiping away blood, Spaddy is sometimes described as a kid who came along too late in life. Had he fought in the '80s, when the commercial networks turned a number of 135-pounders into Saturday matinee idols, the thinking goes, he would have been a star.

Had the Spadafora-Dorin bloodbath unfolded on NBC on a Saturday afternoon with Marv Albert and Ferdie Pacheco filling the air with superlatives, The Pittsburgh Kid would have indeed been launched toward stardom. But what if Spadafora wasn't going up against Dorin, but rather the likes of Edwin Rosario? Or Livingstone Bramble? Could he have outboxed Pernell Whitaker or Hector Camacho? Would he have survived while trying to prove his mettle by fighting on the inside with Julio Cesar Chavez?

Spadafora hasn't "arrived" simply because he elected to stand toe to toe with Dorin, an opponent who has a whopping seven knockouts in 22 outings. Nobody outside of the 412 area code thinks Spadafora's the real lightweight champion unless he beats Floyd Mayweather. And how, in the name of Tony "Sacramento Or Bust" Lopez, can Spadafora be taken seriously unless he fights far away from his hometown? Only six of his 37 bouts have taken place outside of Pennsylvania or neighboring Ohio or West Virginia.

Here's hoping Spadafora isn't kidding when he talks about wanting to return the favor to Dorin by facing the Romanian in Bucharest or in Dorin's adopted home of Montreal. (The rematch is a virtual certainty, possibly on HBO in September.) Let's see Spadafora take his act overseas (or at least out of his tri-state area), learn from his strategic mistakes, unify two-thirds of the alphabet crown, and then do whatever he can (including taking much less money) to square off with Mayweather before "Pretty Boy" climbs in weight.

Great fight? Yeah, Spadafora-Dorin was that. But a great effort by the IBF king it wasn't. Enough already from his hometown scribes and TV talkies, who can't tell an uppercut from an Enswell and ought to stick to reporting on Steelers mini-camp. For some of the rest of us, the hunger for another lightweight star has yet to be satisfied. The Pittsburgher, despite all that sauciness and those big onions, remains an acquired taste. ■

CAMERA CLICKS

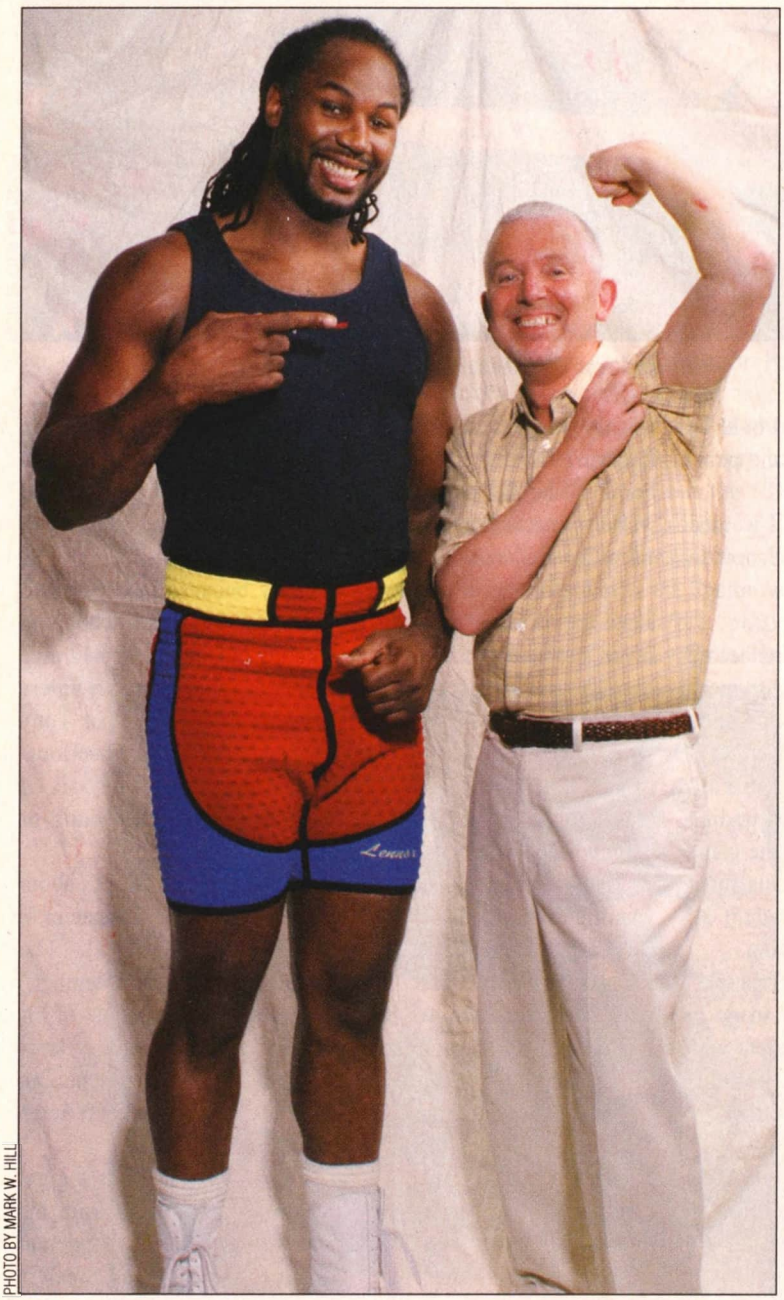


PHOTO BY MARK W. HILL

Any guesses as to which of these guys is the heavyweight champion of the world and which one sits in front of a computer for a living? Lennox Lewis, the editor-in-chief, so to speak, of the heavyweight division, enjoyed a comical moment with THE RING's editor-in-chief, Nigel Collins, during a recent photo shoot at Lewis' Pocono Mountains training camp.

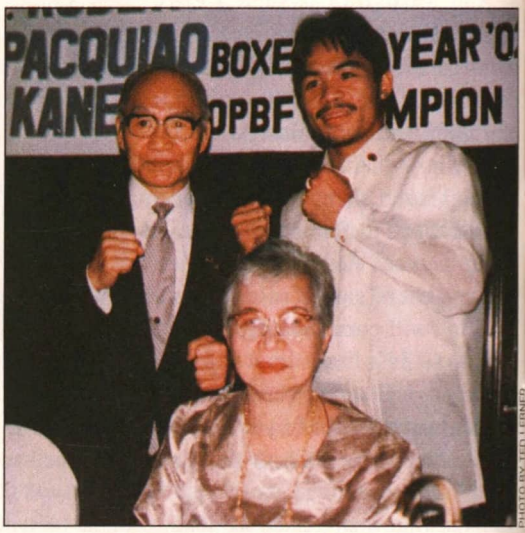


PHOTO BY TED LEONIS

Hey Pac-Man: You don't want to mess with this old guy! At the annual boxing awards dinner in the Philippines recently, 2002 Boxer of the Year Manny Pacquiao posed with former Orient featherweight champ Shigeji Kaneko of Japan, as well as Laura Elorde, the widow of the great Flash Elorde. Mrs. Elorde could vouch for the fact that Kaneko was no pushover, as he defeated her husband all three times they fought.

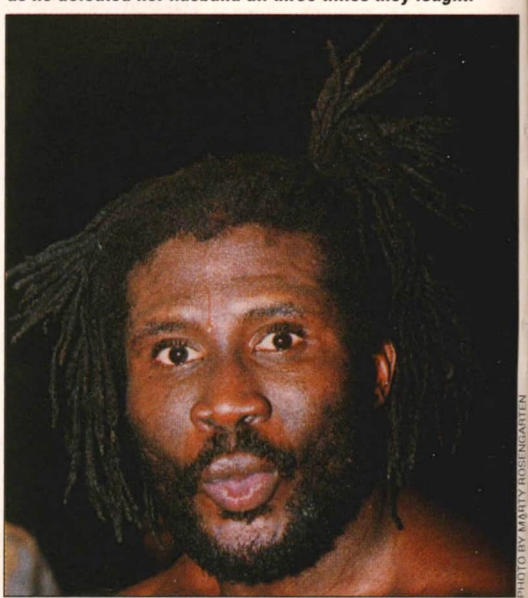


PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

No, this isn't the guy from that Bud Light commercial who puts his dog on his head before walking into the bar. It's heavyweight Duncan Dokiwari, recently back from a three-year layoff with renewed hunger and a decidedly different hairstyle.

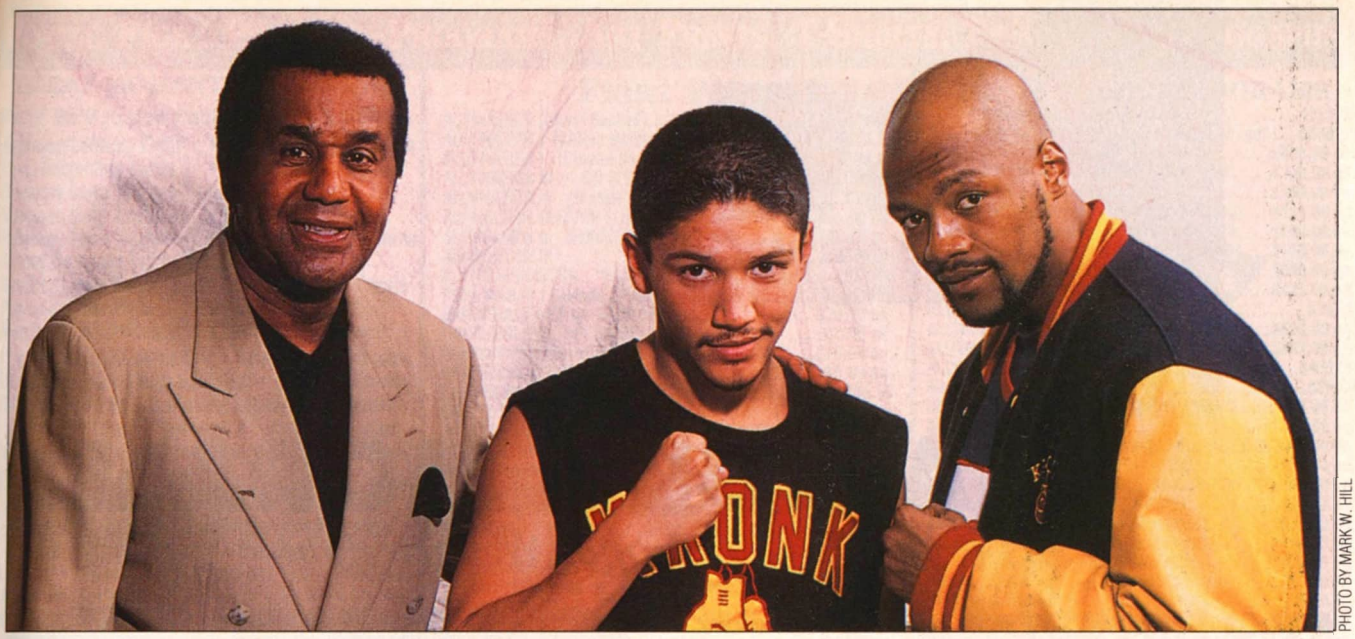


PHOTO BY MARK W. HILL

Trainer Emanuel Steward may have a reputation as a hired-gun, but he doesn't only work with champs and superstars. Here, Steward is posed with his new hot prospect Octavio Lara and veteran junior middleweight Marlon Thomas, both products of Steward's famed Kronk Gym in Detroit.

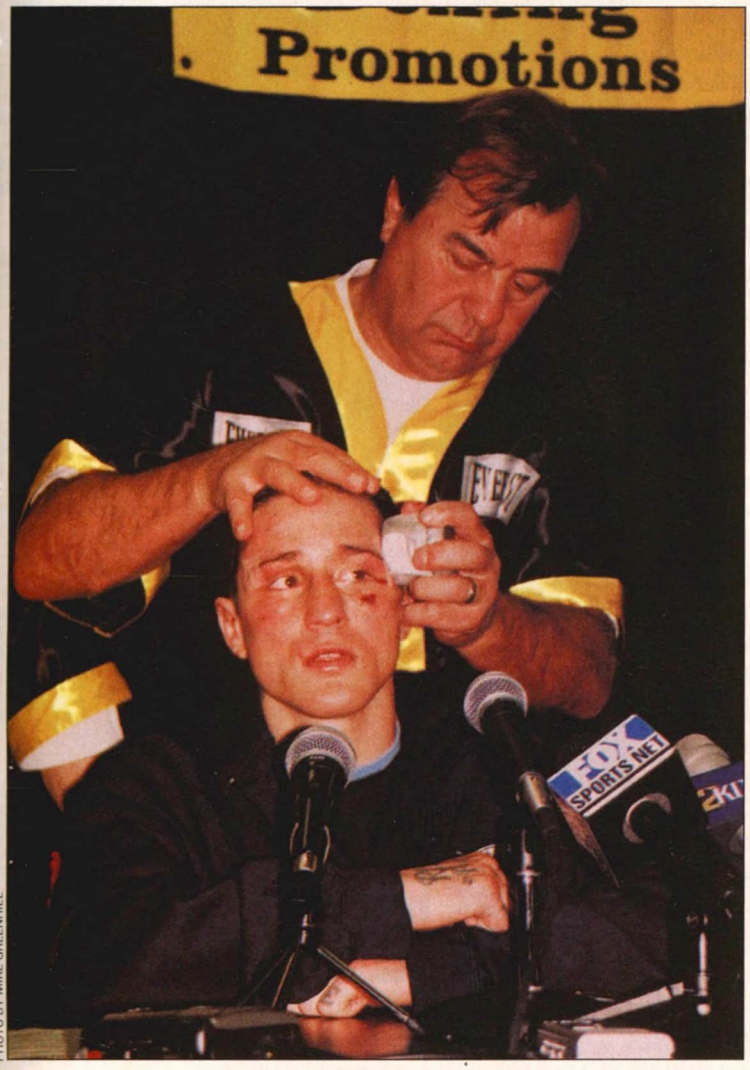


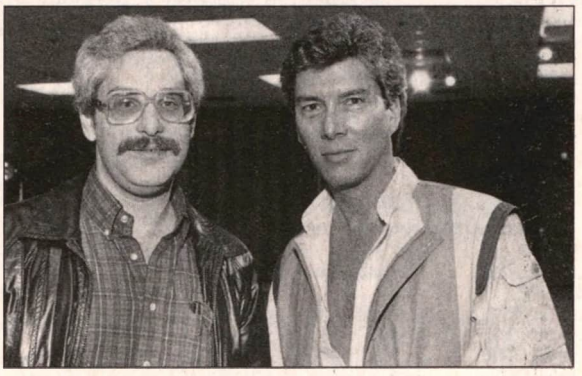
PHOTO BY MIKE GREENHILL

A hard night's work: Jesse Reid had to pull double-duty as both Paul Spadafora's chief second and cutman for his bout with Leonard Dorin, and even an hour after the fight, Reid's work still wasn't done. Normally a top-notch defensive fighter, "Spaddy" got all he could handle from Dorin, and Reid got all he could handle as a result.

PHOTO BY MIKE GREENHILL

Perhaps these round-card girls at the Paul Spadafora-Leonard Dorin fight in Pittsburgh are just your style, and if so, that's great. But if not, the good news is that there's plenty of Iron City Beer on tap at Petersen Events Center.

NOSTALGIA CORNER



While VH1 is constantly celebrating the 1980s with its I Love The '80s *series, there are some who might like to suppress any evidence of their existence during that decade. Both commentator Al Bernstein and ring announcer Michael Buffer seemed to still be perfecting their respective looks when this photograph was taken in 1984. Thankfully, Buffer has swayed away from the exposed-chest look over the next 19 years.*

NEW FACES

ARTURO MORALES

Junior Welterweight

By Joe Santoliquito

Arturo Morales can't figure it out. Somehow he acquired the rage, despite a normal family life devoid of the emotional trauma many fighters endure. There were no run-ins with the law in his youth, no hardships that pushed him to a dangerous place. Morales has a clean emotional slate.

So where does the fury come from?

The way Morales sees it, the steam that builds within him during a fight has to be in his blood. The junior welterweight's father had the anger. His uncles all had it. And now it seems Morales has inherited the same DNA strand. It just rises after someone hits him. And hits him. And hits him some more.

Morales fights like a Weeble, except he doesn't even wobble like the toys did. You can't hurt him. You can't knock him down. "El Toro" likes to stand in there and bang, regardless of the fact that he lacks a knockout punch. But Morales' stubbornness has certainly paved the way to early pro success, as he's gotten off to an undefeated 14-0 (4) start.

The anger manifests itself in Morales' demeanor during a fight. It usually starts as a gradual build-up, almost as if Morales likes getting hit, causing him to come at foes even harder. Morales fights with a controlled fury, gaining momentum and then exploding.

The style carries a two-pronged effect: It demoralizes opponents when they find out that they can't hurt the 23-year-old Mexican-American from Pittsburg, California, and it enables him to bash away and score, willing to take one punch to land two.

"It's not the smartest thing to do; it's just a bad habit," Morales said. "I don't really like to

(Continued on page 54)

PRO RECORD

2000		
Sept. 10	Fernando Yguado, Reno, NV	W 4
Oct. 7	Ruben Coronado, Las Vegas	KO 2
Nov. 5	Alfonso Perez, Chula Vista, CA	W 4
2001		
March 10	Jimmy Blou, Vallejo, CA	KO 2
May 13	Raimundo Almeida, West Wendover, UT	W 4
Aug. 5	Alejandro Jimenez, Las Vegas	W 6
Nov. 10	Mahan Washington, San Francisco	W 4
2002		
Feb. 22	Arturo Rodriguez, Lemoore, CA	KO 4
July 26	Ramon Valle, Lemoore	W 4
Sept. 13	Jaime Morales, Las Vegas	W 6
Nov. 16	John Roby, Vallejo	KO 1
Dec. 13	Pedro Garcia, Tucson, AZ	W 6
2003		
Feb. 7	Alejandro Jimenez, San Jose, CA	W 6
May 24	Arturo Reyes, Vallejo	W 8

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14	14	0	0	4

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JAMES TONEY vs. BERNARD HOPKINS

The Ghost Of Superfights Past

By William Dettloff

When negotiations are complete and James Toney and Bernard Hopkins finally get together, few outside the hardcore fight community will notice. The result won't make the evening news, probably not even in Philadelphia or in Ann Arbor, Michigan, the fighters' hometowns. There's a good chance it won't do the pay-per-view numbers Oscar De La Hoya pulled in this past May for hastening the decline of poor Yory Boy Campas, and the weigh-in will certainly not be attended by myriad screeching teenyboppers in belly shirts. The fight has zero crossover appeal; guys who paint their bodies and scream, shivering and drunk at football games, will have no interest, nor will the hoops set or the ballpark junkies. But that's all right, because it's not a fight for them.

Eddie Futch would have loved this fight. You can hear him almost, dissecting it for you, slowly, deliberately, revealing eventually, matter-of-factly, who will win and why. Ray Arcel would have loved it too. So would Teddy Brenner if he were here still, and Jack Blackburn and Charley Goldman. Whitey Bimstein would have loved this fight, and so would Chickie Ferrara, and Freddie Brown. Toney-Hopkins is a fight your grandfather would have loved. Maybe your old man, too.

What's so great about it? If you didn't know the guys involved, it would be a reasonable question. After all, one of them is a puffed-up middleweight, and the other will be by fight time. One is 38 years old and surly as hell. The other is a moody, 34-year-old counterpuncher who was one of the best in the world a full decade ago. Both have good chins and good defense, and neither is a huge puncher, so you can pretty much forget about a knockout. Not only that, the suits are going to make you pay to watch it on television, and instead of putting it in Philadelphia or Detroit or another real fight town, they'll probably put it in Las Vegas, even though there aren't two top fighters in the world who are less glitter than are these two guys.

But you do know the fighters. You know it's a great fight and you know why. And you know the cliches already too: "They're old school." "They're throwbacks." "Guys don't fight anymore like they do." In this business, the cliches are sales pitches and almost always crap, the drivel cranked out by slimy marketing types who think fight fans are all brainless dolts who will swallow whatever swill given them, and buy, buy, buy. But this time, the cliches and sales pitches are right on, and even if they're trite by now and you're sick of reading them and hearing them, too bad—they're true.

"This could be a Joey Maxim fight or a Harold Johnson fight or an Archie Moore fight," said Hall of Fame trainer and manager Lou Duva, who requires little prompting to launch headlong into a breathless tirade praising all things pre-1960. But he knows good contemporary fighters when he sees them and he knows a good fight, too. The right ones still get him excited. "I would say that of the breed out there, these are the last two that belong to the old school—even though James Toney is the one who fights more in the old-school style. Hopkins likes to get too cute in there sometimes, but he's a heck of a fighter, too. They're both from the old school."

From Duva, that's heavy praise.

You know what Duva is talking about: Toney stands right in front of you and blocks and slips everything you throw and picks you apart with short, sharp punches on the inside. Take him to the ropes and he'll tear you up. Hopkins can do it coming forward or backing up, and there's not a fighter in the world who is more balanced, who can do more things well in the ring and who is willing to do them against anyone (provided of course he's compensated to his ever-elusive and expanding satisfaction). Nobody will

PHOTO BY JAN SANDERS

PHOTO BY BRUCE MACNABB

PHOTO BY NASSER KHAN

Roy Jones is the only common opponent on both Hopkins and Toney's records; he was the last to beat Hopkins and the first to beat Toney (pictured), winning unanimous decisions over both. Jones told THE RING he thinks Hopkins will outwork and outpoint Toney.

bitch when a low blow lands in this fight and no one will cry during the postfight interview. No one will forget to jab or go to the body. No one will resort to throwing desperate haymakers, and the referee won't have to warn anyone to start mixing it up. Drop this fight into 1946, and it fits right in. In this business, as in most, that is a rare and elegant thing.

It might be that you're not impressed by old-school bluster. Nostalgia isn't for everyone. Some tastes tend more toward subplot and long-standing grudges and redemption and irony. If that's you, there's some of that too. Consider: Dan Goossen once promoted Hopkins. They squabbled. It got ugly. They went to court. They split up, not on friendly terms, and here it is a lifetime later and Goossen is promoting Toney (and fairly brilliantly it should be said, considering that just a short while ago Toney was an obese, largely inactive heavyweight struggling against similarly built journeymen).

One would suspect that Goossen is thus getting a large degree of satisfaction out of the opportunities he's gotten to throw digs Hopkins' way. One also would suspect that on a personal level he's invested a considerable amount in the outcome of this match. Few things are as irresistible as the emotional satisfaction promised by revenge, and you couldn't blame Goossen if it was especially personal and dear to him that Hopkins catch a beating. One might even expect that he went out of his way to try to make the fight. It would be wonderful payback after all, provided Toney wins it. Goossen denies it.

"It wasn't that way," he said. "James and I talked about it and planned way back when we got together that we wouldn't call out anybody specific, because when you do that, people tend to turn a deaf ear. We said James will fight anyone, from Bernard Hopkins on up to Mike Tyson and Lennox Lewis. James said he would give any of those guys an opportunity to say, 'Hey, I'm interested.' Bernard did."

But wouldn't it be especially rewarding to see Toney dismantle Hopkins?

"When everything is said and done, I've never gotten any satisfaction from seeing the

STAFF PICKS

Nigel Collins: Hopkins W 12

"Although it was a great fight and a huge win for Toney, I think his victory over Vasilliy Jirov was somewhat deceiving. Jirov is pretty much a face-first fighter and marched straight into Toney's punches. Hopkins is far too smart for that, plus he's quicker than both Toney and Jirov. Look for 'The Executioner' to take a close but convincing decision."

Eric Raskin: Hopkins W 12

"While size can be an advantage, Toney's style minimizes that advantage. He doesn't lean on opponents and he doesn't punch any harder now than he did as a middleweight. Hopkins has every other edge: speed, conditioning, focus, consistency, and even height. I expect him to win a clear-cut decision in a clean, crisp, entertaining fight."

Stu Saks: Hopkins KO 8

"Toney appears to be in pretty decent shape, but years of abuse to his body has taken a toll. Hopkins, who would be foolish to come in any higher than 175, has taken superb care of himself and will use that edge in conditioning to wear Toney down. It will be fun for a few rounds, but the referee will ultimately stop it with Toney still on his feet."

Joseph Santoliquito: Toney W 12

"This is a clear example of Hopkins following the lead of his pal, Roy Jones, and stepping up in class to gain some attention and added cash in his pockets. Sure, it's an attractive fight that I would pay to see, but Toney is not Hopkins' John Ruiz. Toney may be just as fast as Hopkins, with the same old-school boxing skills. The difference is strength, an intangible Toney has over Hopkins."

William Dettloff: Hopkins W 12

"Toney won't be as focused as he was for Jirov and it will show in his conditioning. Also, Hopkins is too smart to fight Toney's fight. He'll move in and out, stay away from the ropes, and outhustle Toney, in part because he'll want it more."

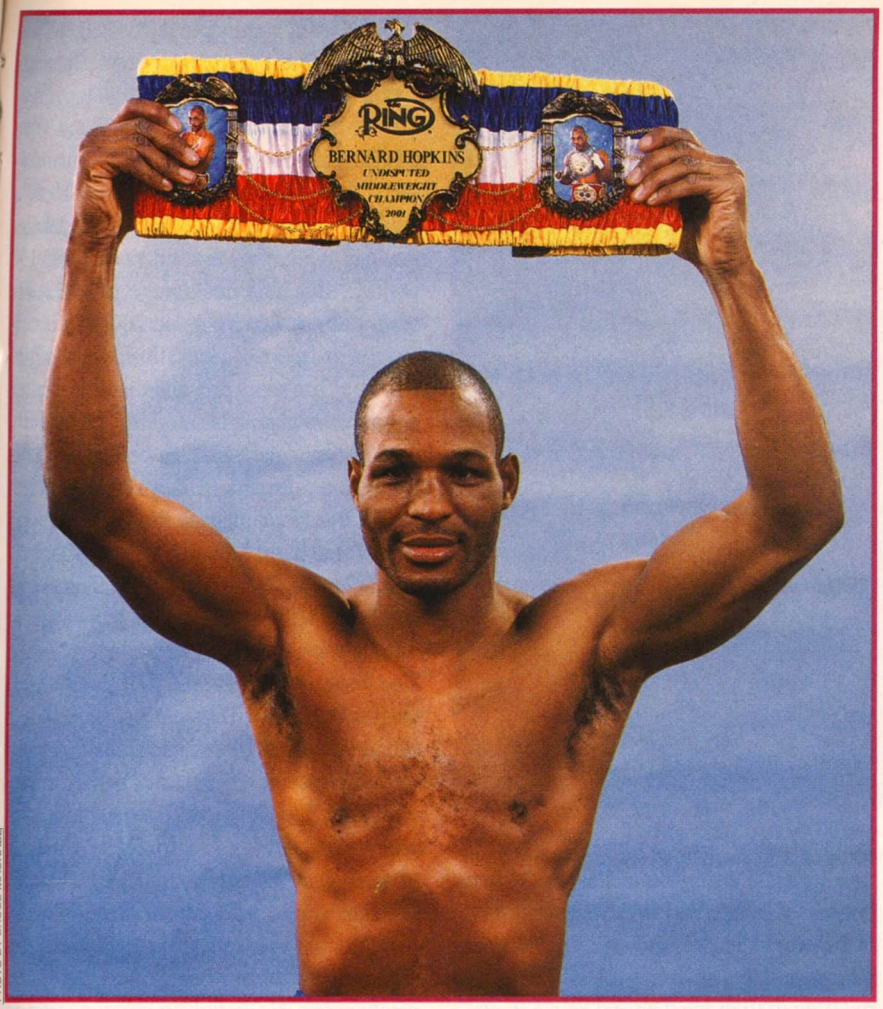


PHOTO BY BRUCE MACNABB

Hopkins holds aloft his RING middleweight championship belt, which will not be on the line against Toney. In trying to figure out why Hopkins will ultimately take this dangerous fight, Hall of Famer Gil Clancy pointed out that, in many regards, he has nothing to lose.

downfall of one of my former fighters," Goossen said. "For example, when, ironically, James Toney knocked out Michael Nunn for the middleweight title. I had promoted Nunn from early on, and to see it turn around the way it did when he left, and to see the way it went for him afterward, could have given me tremendous pride, but I didn't feel it. I felt sorry for him."

That said, the passage of time has not softened Goossen's stance.

"Bernard sticks out like a red flag compared to the other numerous fighters I've had in the past when it comes to the disloyalty factor," Goossen said. "When other fighters who were younger and less mature listened to other people, I kind of passed it off to immaturity and always thinking that the grass was greener somewhere else. But Bernard was way beyond that in experience and way beyond the immaturity stage. He's the only fighter that has done me wrong where I can hold it against him, because he disrupted me and my family, and did some things that I'll never forget. But it doesn't have anything to do with this fight getting made. And James Toney breaking him in half won't fill the emptiness I feel inside when I think of Bernard."

If Goossen feels empty inside, it's clear that Hopkins won't—not at or around the 190-pound weight limit for which the fight would be signed. If anything, he'll be too full. That's another factor that makes this an intriguing fight: In an age where one fighter after another skips from this weight division to that, picking up belts here, dropping them there, and generally flitting around so much in the never-ending pursuit of alphabet titles that you don't know what his best weight is anymore, Hopkins has been an out-of-the-womb middleweight. You got the sense he always would be. But many old-timers fought at catchweights against bigger guys and then returned to their best weight, which from all appearances is what Hopkins is doing. Still, it is stunning almost to think of Hopkins fighting a guy who fights at a

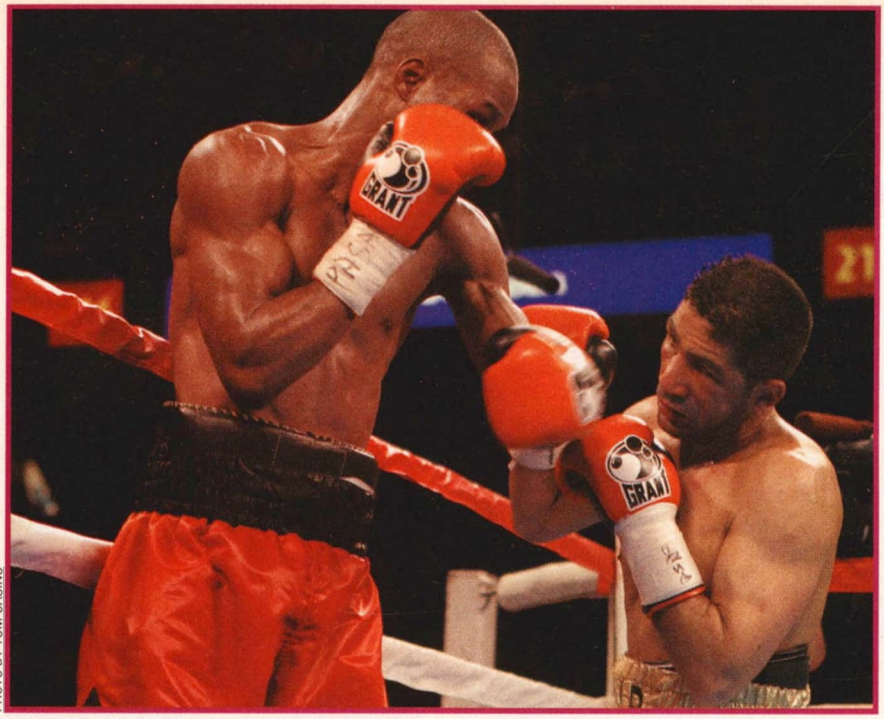


PHOTO BY TOM CASINO

In Hopkins' most recent fight, against hopelessly outmatched Morrade Hakkar, "The Executioner" got to display all of his old-school wares. Hopkins knows every clever move and, as illustrated here, can destroy a man with his back along the ropes.

weight 30 pounds heavier than he. It is why many are picking Toney.

"I like Toney big," said Hall of Fame trainer and manager Gil Clancy. "He fought a great fight against Vassiliy Jirov, who's a real good fighter. Both are good fighters, but at 190 pounds, I think Toney will just be too big and strong for Hopkins. The weight is too much."

Of course, not everyone agrees. Not surprisingly, WBA heavyweight titlist and reigning world light heavyweight champion Roy Jones doesn't sweat the weight. Jones, of course, defeated both fighters: Hopkins way back in May 1993 for the IBF middleweight title, then Toney the following year for the IBF super middleweight crown in the bout that initiated Toney's long but ultimately recoverable nosedive. Jones told THE RING: "I like Hopkins. I like his hustle. Toney will be stronger and more powerful, but Hopkins is relentless. He's tenacious and he could outwork Toney. If there's a knockout, it will be by Toney because he's more powerful, but I like Hopkins over the distance."

Hopkins' work rate and activity level should be troubling to Toney-backers. It should be now and, according to Hopkins, it was way back when the two competed in the same weight division. In early-June, Hopkins told *Philadelphia Daily News* boxing writer Bernard Fernandez, "When he was the IBF middleweight champion and I was the number-one contender in 1993, Toney moved up to super middleweight to fight Iran Barkley, who was older, slower, and less skilled than me. He ran from me then and he really don't want no part of me now. I've been owing him this butt-whippin' for a long time. Jackie Kallen (Toney's manager then) even told me once, 'We don't need you, because James is lazy, and you're not.'"

For that reason and others, it's a fight fraught with intriguing possibilities, particularly from a styles perspective. Here's what's interesting: Toney will be the bigger guy and the guy more used to carrying 190 pounds. But he's not a huge puncher. He wasn't at middleweight and he isn't now. It took an awful lot of clean, flush shots to hurt and floor Jirov in April, and that was against a guy running straight into him. And clearly that's when Toney is at his best, when he is being pressured and can counterpunch freely. But Hopkins is no dummy, and surely he knows the folly of fighting Toney's fight. His best chance will be to draw Toney away from the ropes, make Toney go to him, and counterpunch the counterpuncher. The blueprint is there: Tricky Montell Griffin outpointed Toney in '95 and again in '96, and even if the margins of victory for Griffin were very small and, perhaps, miscalculated, it clearly is the best way for anyone not named Roy Jones to fight Toney. It calls on that old-school maxim: Whatever your guy wants to do, don't let him do it.

Clearly Goossen knows the value of strategy as well as his guy's strengths and weaknesses. He is not above engaging in some psychological warfare designed to entice Hopkins into fighting the wrong fight.

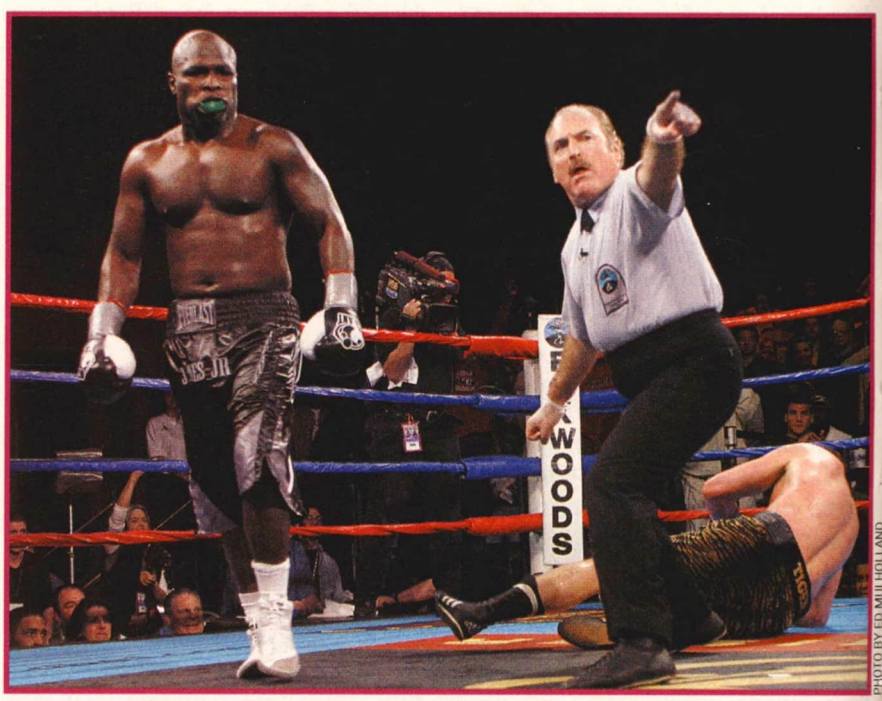


PHOTO BY ED MULHOLLAND

Toney decks Vassiliy Jirov in the 12th round of his sensational victory in April for the IBF cruiserweight belt. Though not a huge hitter, Toney's success in wearing down the imposing Jirov has some thinking he'll be too big and strong for Hopkins.

"Bernard has two choices," said Goossen. "He can stand and fight like the streetfighter he always says he is, or he can run like all the big talkers always do. If he jabs and runs, it shouldn't be 'Battle Of The 'Hood,' (the name given the event), but 'Battle Of Little Red Riding Hood.'"

Either way, let's assume Hopkins has a shot. Make it a pick-'em fight. The big question for Hopkins is why? Why this fight? Why now? (For the record, Hopkins did not return calls seeking comment.)

As has been the case since his career-defining win over Felix Trinidad, Hopkins has had options: IBF junior middleweight titleholder Winky Wright, William Joppy, or a third bout with Robert Allen. None of them are overly attractive, but still superior to his recent TKO of mandatory WBC challenger Morrade Hakkar, for which Hopkins made no apologies.

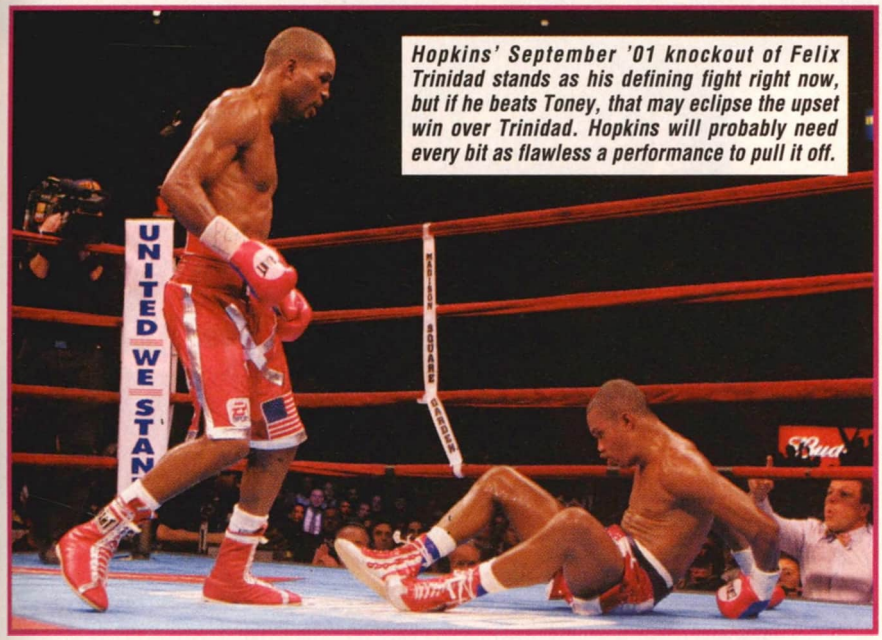
The ornery Philadelphian did balk, however, when his promoter, Don King, attempted to shave $500,000 off his agreed-upon purse of $3.5-million. In June, King tried to convince HBO Pay-Per-View and host site Mandalay Bay to increase the guarantees, but was unsuccessful, which appeared to scuttle the match. But with few other attractive options open to Hopkins, there's a strong possibility it could be revived.

"It's just about the money," said Clancy. "He'll get more money than he would have against anyone else right now and he doesn't have anything to lose—if he loses, he'll still be the middleweight champ."

True enough. But Hopkins is the guy who priced himself out of a rematch with Jones at light heavyweight that would have made him twice what he's getting against Toney. If this fight is finalized, it says one of two things: Hopkins recognizes that he's a 38-year-old prize fighter and is getting while the getting is still good, as the saying goes, or he is resolute in the belief that he can whip Toney. If it's the latter, that kind of confidence is both telling and disarming.

PHOTO BY JAN SANDERS

Toney's promoter, Dan Goossen, used to promote Hopkins, but he denies that their bitter split motivated him to try to make this fight. Goossen admits, however, that he is still upset about Hopkins' "disloyalty."



Hopkins' September '01 knockout of Felix Trinidad stands as his defining fight right now, but if he beats Toney, that may eclipse the upset win over Trinidad. Hopkins will probably need every bit as flawless a performance to pull it off.

Duva likes Toney to win the fight "not because he's the bigger guy, but because of his style—he picks you apart and wears you down, wears you down." Still, he respects Hopkins' chances. "The weight won't bother Bernard. He's a veteran and a cute guy, and you can bet he's got a fight plan in his mind. He's smart enough to know it's going to be a tough fight."

Hopkins is smart enough to know, too, that it's harder to get to the top and stay there than it is to get there, fall off, get back, and try to stay there again. Maybe that's the source of his confidence. He's been one of the best and most consistent prize fighters in the world for a good long while, and he knows that takes a certain mental toughness and stubborn discipline that Toney, for all his old-school skills and innate talent, has never exhibited, consistently, over time. It could be the difference in a fight that will bring smiles to the faces of a lot of old ghosts.

But Toney-Hopkins is not just a relic of the past; it's the sort of creative matchmaking that can pump new interest and energy into the game. If the powers that be can't find the money to make it happen, we'll lose not only a peek into the past, but perhaps also the wave of the future. ■

Reversal Or Replay?

OSCAR VS. SHANE

20 Experts Decide

Compiled by Joe Santoliquito

It seems like the first Shane Mosley-Oscar De La Hoya fight occurred in a land far, far away in a time long, long ago. This is especially true when you consider the divergent paths both fighters have taken since their June 17, 2000, clash in Los Angeles, California.

Since losing to Mosley, "The Golden Boy" has reinvented himself and is more popular now than he's ever been. De La Hoya, 36-2 (29), enters the rematch with Mosley, in which the world junior middleweight title is at stake, on a four-fight winning streak. He's fighting with more confidence and focus than he has at any time in his career, under new trainer Floyd Mayweather Sr.

Meanwhile, Mosley, 38-2 (35) with 1 no-contest, went from the top of the boxing world to an ex-champ trying to claw his way back to the top after a pair of ugly losses to Vernon Forrest. Sugar Shane will enter the De La Hoya rematch on September 13 at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas having gone more than two years without a win. Mosley's last victory was a third-round knockout of Adrian Stone on July 21, 2001. Since then, Mosley has gone 0-2 with 1 no-contest (vs. Raul Marquez) in his last three fights.

The cognoscenti of the boxing world, however, are still torn as to whom is the better fighter. Many see the renewed commitment and the addition of Mayweather as an edge that favors De La Hoya, while questioning Mosley's confidence. Others view Mosley's hand speed as still being too much for De La Hoya to handle, while doubting if Mayweather has enhanced The Golden Boy at all.

Here's what 20 experts polled by THE RING have to say:

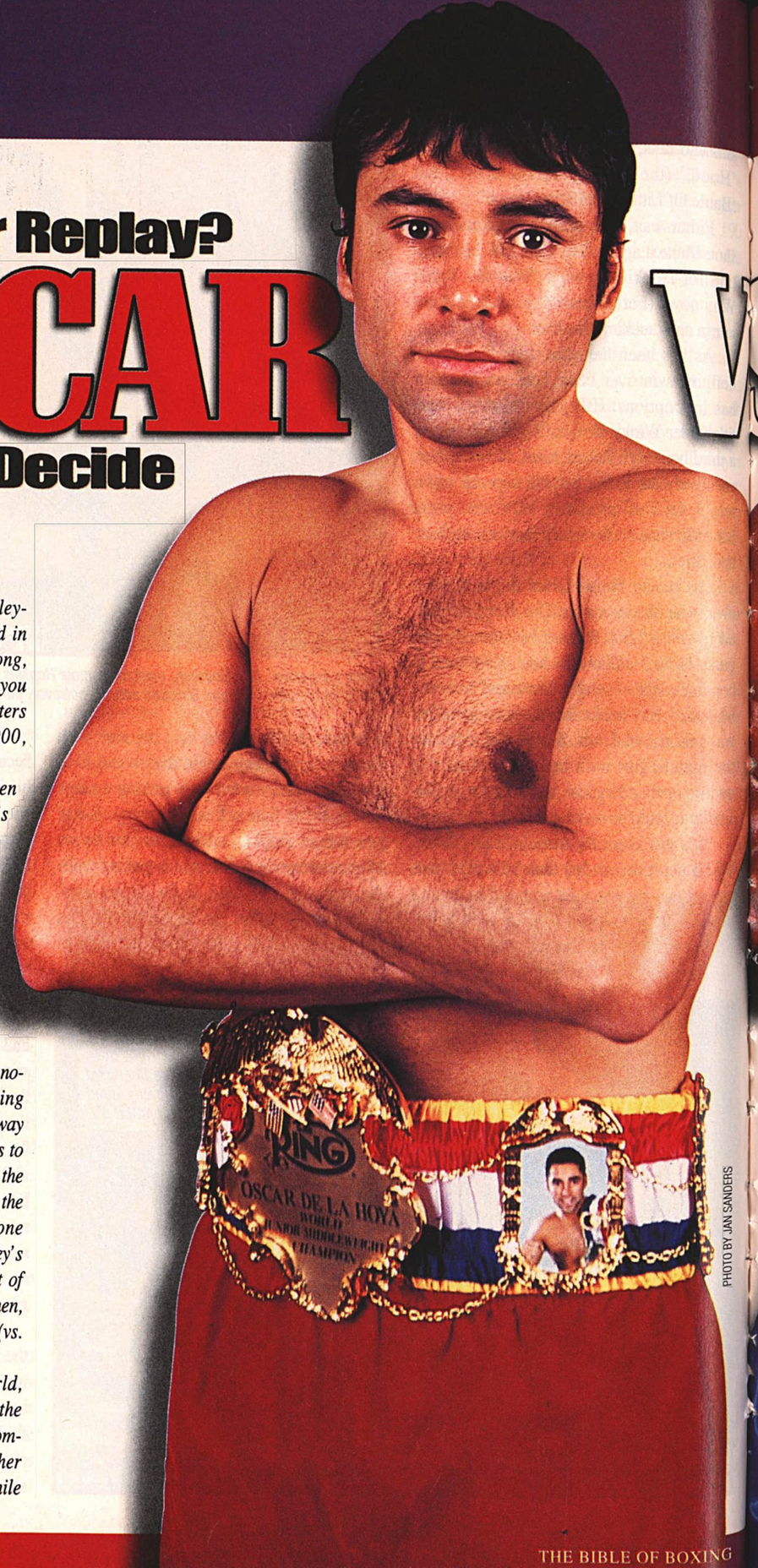


PHOTO BY JAN SANDERS

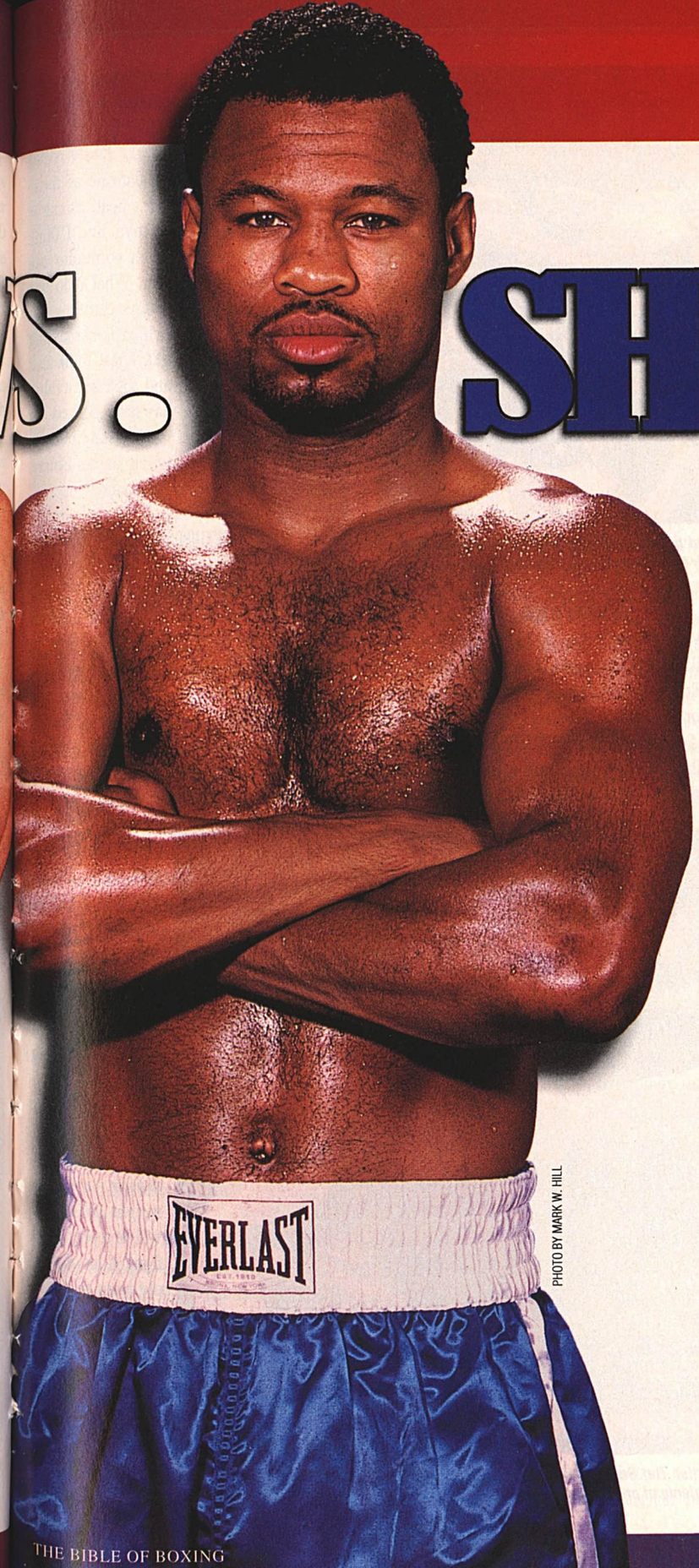


PHOTO BY MARK W. HILL

STEVE SPRINGER (*Los Angeles Times boxing writer*): "I think that things have changed in the regard that Oscar has become a better fighter under Floyd Mayweather Sr., using his right hand more and becoming more of a defensive fighter. Oscar has improved, where Shane hasn't, and with the two losses, his confidence has been damaged. I can't imagine the fight ending in anything other than a decision, which I pick Oscar to win close."

BOB PAPA (*NBC boxing's blow-by-blow announcer*): "I liked Mosley the first time, but I think there will be a different outcome this time. Oscar will reverse the first decision. Oscar is the modern-day Sugar Ray Leonard; he knows how to reinvent himself. He's taking fights that he knows he's going to win. He's just hitting his peak as a fighter, and you have give Mayweather some credit with that. But Oscar is just hitting his maturity as an athlete. Everything is sort of coming together for him right now."

KASSIM OUMA (*junior middleweight contender*): "Oscar will win, straight up. Oscar has been going up in weight and taking his talent with him. When Mosley fought Oscar the first time, they were both welterweights, and Mosley was able to use his jab

PHOTO BY HERBIE WHYNE

Many experts feel Mosley's confidence was shattered by the consecutive losses to Vernon Forrest, who had "Sugar Shane" in serious trouble during their first encounter, in New York in January 2002.

and beat Oscar. Mosley was a smaller and faster guy, but now that both are bigger, Oscar can use his power and strength against Mosley. Mosley didn't look good against Raul Marquez at 154. Oscar is rising right now, and the guy Oscar should fight is me. But you can't disrespect a champion who keeps doing it, like Oscar."

JOE TESSITORE (*ESPN2's **Friday Night Fights** blow-by-blow announcer*): "I like De La Hoya a lot. I think the influence of Floyd Mayweather Sr. has been tremendous for him. De La Hoya's use of his right hand at 154 is much more effective than anything Shane has to offer at 154. I can tell you for a fact that we're dealing with a better Oscar De La Hoya at 154 than what Shane is at 154. Oscar wins by a unanimous decision."

TIM SMITH (*New York **Daily News** boxing writer*): "Shane is just one of those guys that De La Hoya can't beat. Shane is equally as fast as De La Hoya, and I think that throws Oscar off when someone can trade with him who's faster. What I do like about De La Hoya under Mayweather is that he's in better condition, which is something we saw in the Vargas fight. I just think that Shane has his number, and took something off that last win. Shane may have peaked out at 147, but I'm not sure what Shane can do at 154. The intangible, however, favors Shane, who I think wins by a split decision."

AL BERNSTEIN (*Showtime **Championship Boxing** ringside analyst*): "It's a tough fight to call. The one thing that goes in De La Hoya's favor is that he's so anxious to fight again. He may see things now in Mosley that may make him think Mosley is beatable. I don't have a firm prediction yet, but the first fight was really two different fights. De La Hoya had Mosley in a little bit of trouble the first half, and Mosley made adjustments and came back. Either way, it'll be an entertaining fight. Going into this fight, De La Hoya is fighting better. If someone put a gun to my head, I might lean toward De La Hoya, but not with any strong conviction."

Some insiders, like New York Daily News *boxing writer Tim Smith, believe that Mosley is just one opponent that De La Hoya can't beat. Mosley's hand speed caused De La Hoya plenty of problems in their first meeting.*

WINKY WRIGHT (*IBF junior middleweight titlist*): "It will be a very good fight. A lot of people want to count Shane Mosley out because of what happened to him against Vernon Forrest, but Forrest is a good fighter. It'll be an exciting fight. I

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

IBF junior middleweight titlist Winky Wright is not totally convinced who will the De La Hoya-Mosley rematch, but he leans toward "The Golden Boy."

just hope the winner would come and fight me. If I had to put some money down on it, I'd say Oscar wins by decision."

DAN RAFAEL (*USA Today boxing writer*): "I like Oscar; I picked Oscar the first time, and it will probably be a close fight again. This time, Oscar won't run out of gas, and he'll do the small things he'll need to do to win. He has a better corner, in my opinion, and he has more confidence, whereas Shane doesn't have any confidence off his fight against Raul Marquez. His confidence was ruined after the Vernon Forrest fights. I expect it to be another good, close fight. Oscar won't make the supposed mistake of eating any seafood before this fight, like he did the first time, when he said he ate a bad oyster and that affected him."

FRANKLIN McNEIL (*Newark Star-Ledger boxing writer*): "It's a tough fight to call, based on the fights that each one has had since their first fight. It's clear De La Hoya hasn't slipped and he's made adjustments that I haven't seen in Mosley. De La Hoya has upped his game more. But that said, I'll base my opinion on what they've done against each other. I like Mosley's chances in the rematch. Mosley's hand speed will be the difference. I think Mosley can outpoint Oscar again the second time. I'm not sold that Shane can't fight effectively at 154. This is a much bigger fight for Mosley than for Oscar. Shane has more to prove."

HECTOR PEREZ (*trainer of world welterweight champion Ricardo Mayorga*): "De La Hoya is going to punish Mosley for what happened in the first fight. Not only mentally, but physically. He was doing all of these other things and he was very distracted. This time, he's going to show everyone what Oscar De La Hoya is all about and he's going to stop Mosley in five rounds."

BERNARD FERNANDEZ (*Philadelphia Daily News boxing writer*): "Originally, I thought that De La Hoya was going to have problems with Mosley, the same kind that Mosley had with Vernon Forrest. But a couple of things have happened in the interim. Mosley has had a lot of changes around him, in terms of his support personnel, and I'm always leery of that. He still hasn't won in his last three fights, and I wonder if he is comfortable and as effective at 154, plus I think this is a different De La Hoya than we saw two years ago. He's rededicated himself to his career. You throw all that into a blender and mix it up, I'm leaning toward Oscar winning by a close decision."

RICARDO MAYORGA (*world welterweight champion*): "I think the fight will go more than five rounds. De La Hoya's not only going to show Mosley his power, but he's going to show his range as a fighter. Mayweather doesn't help De La Hoya that much, though. Oscar's keeping his shoulder up, and that style right there is eliminating one of his hands. He used to be able to use both hands, but under Mayweather, he hasn't done that. He's shown great defense, but De La Hoya has to be there to win. I think very highly of Oscar and what he has done for Hispanic fighters and the Hispanic world. De La Hoya will punish Mosley and stop him late. The only problem with Oscar is that he's not as good-looking as me."

RICH MAROTTA (*color analyst for Fox SportsNet's Sunday Night Fights*): "I've been wrestling with this one. I've had a tough time, because I did pick Mosley the first time around. This time, I have to go with Oscar because he's a better fighter than

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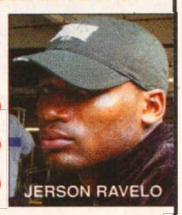

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PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

De La Hoya's new defensive style of turning his shoulder to ward off punches has drawn mixed reviews. Some like it, while others, like welterweight world champion Ricardo Mayorga, say the style takes away from De La Hoya's effectiveness.

he was then. He's improved under Mayweather, whereas Shane has leveled off. He's just more versatile under Mayweather. If he has to adjust, he'll be able to with Mayweather in his corner. I think the revenge factor also gives De La Hoya a slight edge. He's hungry again, so I pick Oscar by close decision this time around."

RONNIE SHIELDS (*trainer of welterweight contender Vernon Forrest*): "I don't see the rematch being any different than the last time they fought. The only way Shane doesn't win the fight is if they steal it from him. I don't see De La Hoya's improved right hand, and Shane will come at De La Hoya like he did the last time. I don't think either fighter is any stronger, but Shane's speed is too much for De La Hoya. It'll be a close fight, with Shane winning by decision."

Ray Leonard likens the De La Hoya-Mosley rivalry to his own series with Roberto Duran, and thinks that De La Hoya will be more focused the second time around, just like Sugar Ray was in the Duran rematch. Leonard predicts that Oscar will dominate Mosley on September 13.

SUGAR RAY LEONARD (*five-division former titleholder*): "The first time around, it was Mosley throwing more punches and more combinations. He was a lot more focused than Oscar was. It's something that happened to me against Duran the first fight. I got a lot of money and a lot of pub internationally, and I kind of lost my focus. We'll see a different Oscar De La Hoya this time. He's taking more pride in what he wants to accomplish. He's put aside all of the extra curricular activities. I see Oscar dominating this time around. He has the momentum going and he has his focus back."

CALVIN WATKINS (*Dallas Morning News boxing writer*): "I'm going to pick Shane Mosley because I think Shane is a

better boxer. The only thing is Shane's mental outlook. He hasn't won in a long, long time. That raises some questions about his confidence level. Oscar has the confidence and the incentive to beat him because he lost so close the first time. But Shane is just a better fighter than Oscar. Shane wins a decision."

GEORGE FOREMAN (*HBO ringside analyst*): "I give it to Shane Mosley this time. I think Oscar did a lot better than what he was given credit for the first time, but his new trainer has taken away from Oscar's old style. Oscar is taking two to get in one. Older fighters who lose their legs use that style. That kind of style won't make Shane Mosley work enough. Oscar has a good stiff left jab, but he's not using it enough. He's slowing down and covering up, making him a sitting duck for a speedy fighter like Shane Mosley. That new trainer has gone too far with Oscar. Shane Mosley has too much speed. But if Oscar can resurrect that stiff left jab he used to have, and his new trainer gets Oscar to bounce up on his toes like he used to, which was something special there, Oscar will give Shane Mosley problems. Otherwise, I see Mosley winning again."

ROLANDO ARELLANO (*co-manager of junior middleweight contender Fernando Vargas*): "It's going to be a good fight. Oscar De La Hoya feels he's indestructible. Shane Mosley knows he can beat Oscar, and that's an important psychological factor. Shane's style lost to Vernon Forrest, but Shane moves and he won't be there for Oscar to counter. If Shane uses his speed and rapid jab, he'll win on points. He has the kind of style exactly to beat Oscar. I see Shane beating Oscar, based on the style."

JORGE ORTIZ (*San Francisco Chronicle boxing writer*): "At this stage, I would pick Oscar, mostly because his career has been back on the upswing since losing to Mosley. He had that very impressive victory over Fernando Vargas and then beat Yory Boy Campas, whereas Mosley lost twice to Vernon Forrest fairly decisively. The first fight between Oscar and Mosley was so close. Oscar has gotten better since then, and Mosley hasn't."

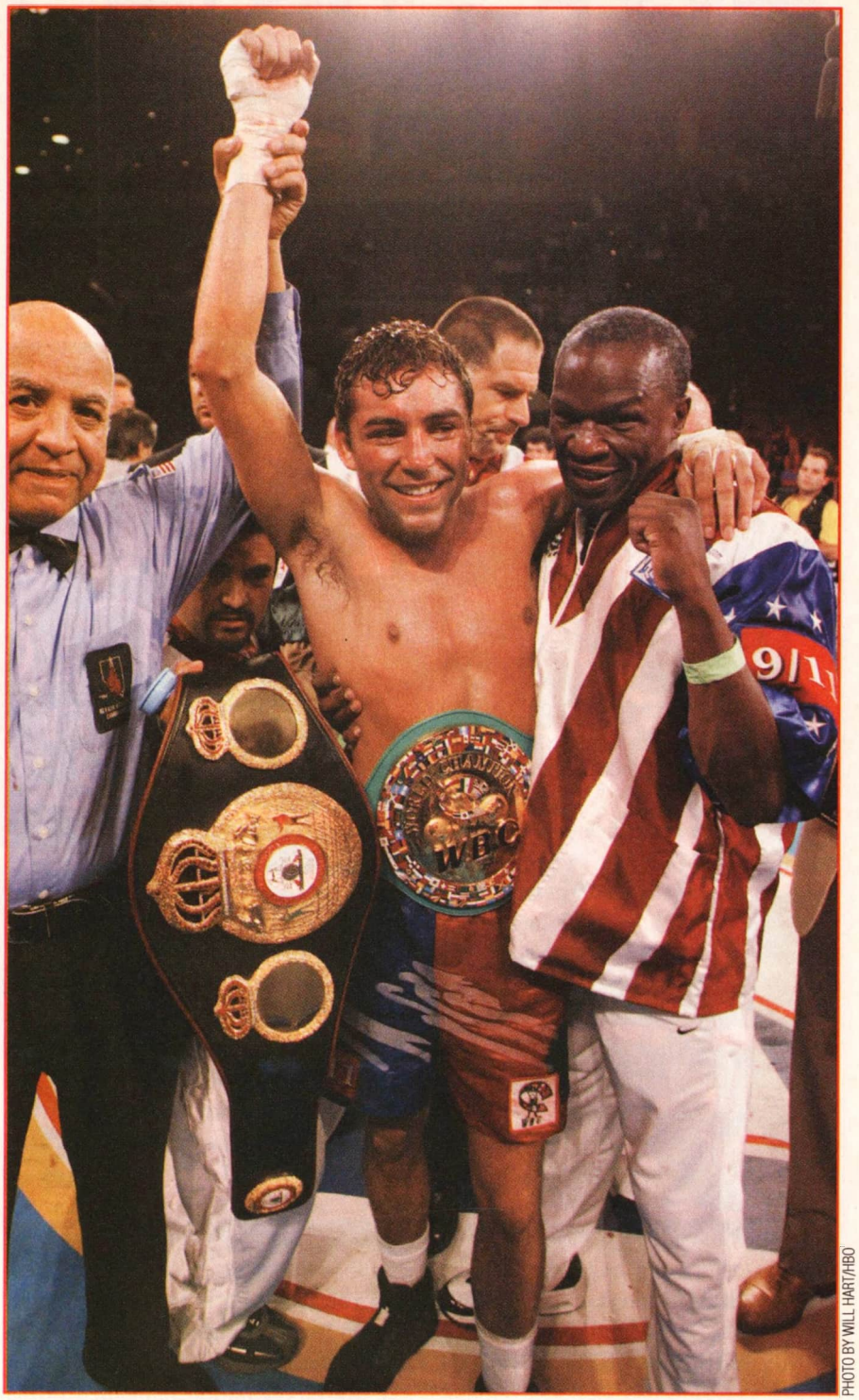


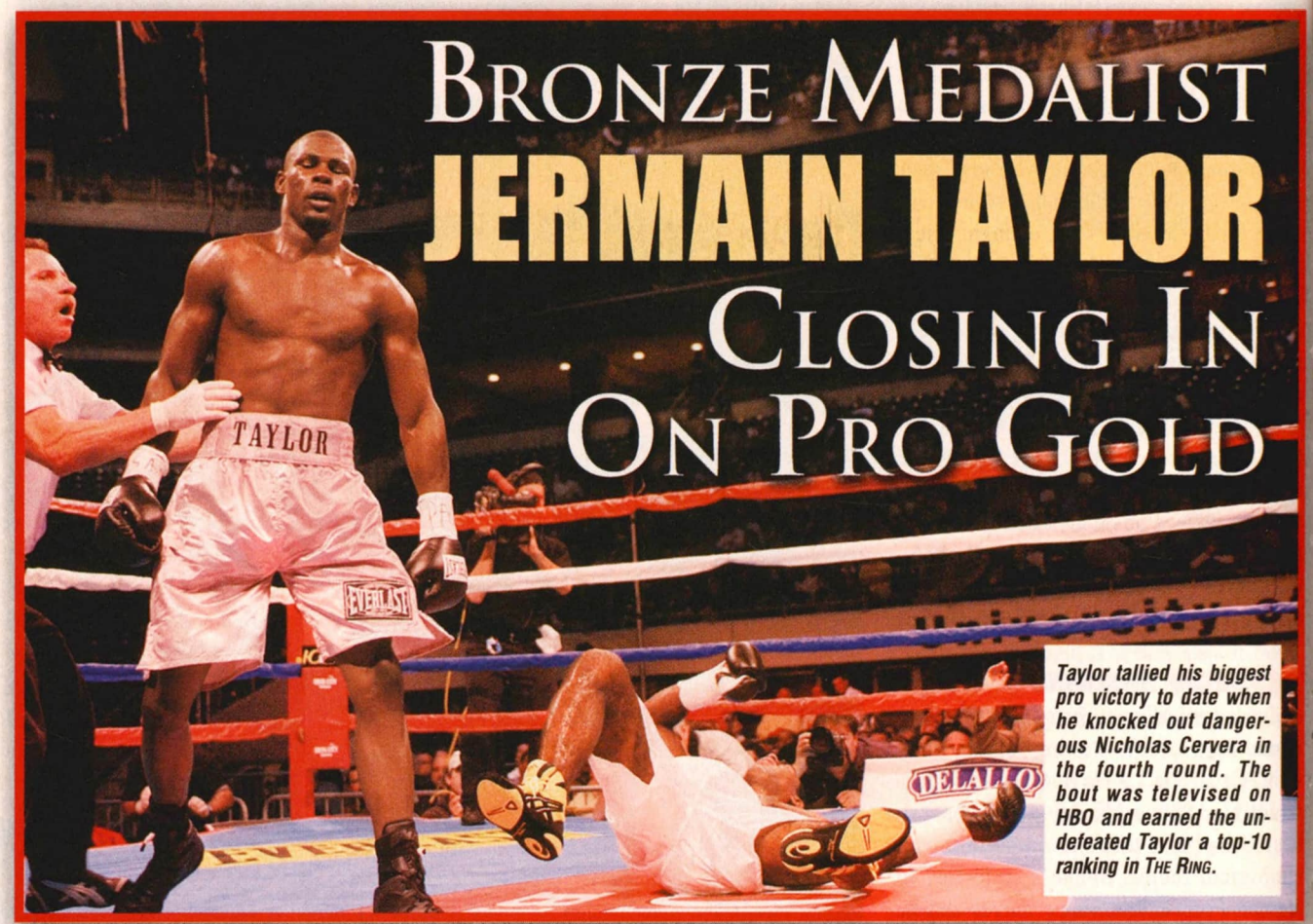
PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

The addition of Floyd Mayweather Sr. has detracted from De La Hoya, according to some. One of the more vocal critics of Mayweather's influence on De La Hoya is George Foreman, who wonders why The Golden Boy doesn't jab or box up on his toes like he used to.

ROBERT ALLEN (*middleweight contender*): "Shane has a decent chin and good mobility, so he's going to be hard to find, and it will be hard to knock Shane out. Oscar is a good left hooker, and if he can come up with a good game plan, he can pull it off. Shane is a little faster on the trigger than Oscar. That right hand will be hitting Oscar all night. He just won't be able to get out of the way of that thing. With Mayweather in his corner, that could get Oscar beat even worse, because he's trying to teach Oscar to become a finesse fighter. I see Shane winning by a majority decision in a close fight."

TOTALS: De La Hoya 13, Mosley 7

THE NEXT GREAT MIDDLEWEIGHT?



Bronze Medalist JERMAIN TAYLOR Closing In On Pro Gold

Taylor tallied his biggest pro victory to date when he knocked out dangerous Nicholas Cervera in the fourth round. The bout was televised on HBO and earned the undefeated Taylor a top-10 ranking in THE RING.

By David Mayo

PHOTOS BY STEVE MATTEO/HBO

Crooning to country tunes in Arkansas hardly rates as unusual, though heads turn when one particular proud Arky cranks his twang. Envisioning a young, wealthy black man tooling around Little Rock with the top popped on a 1974 Pontiac Grandville convertible, singing along to Nashville's latest releases, is, in a manner of speaking, a significant Faith Hill to climb.

The car itself curls enough eyebrows. The sound system is predictably killer, though less predictable are the two televisions Jermain Taylor has installed, or the Sony PlayStation implanted in the console. He hopes to install America Online next.

"I'm like a new kind of nerd," Taylor said. "I just got on the Internet about a year ago. So I'm not an old-fashioned nerd, I'm a new nerd."

But his ride definitely classifies as old-fashioned, and even without the distinctive amenities, the 23-year-old Taylor still would catch more than a few second-glances in the 29-year-old automobile. The blaring country music does it every time.

"I love country music. That's my passion," the rising middleweight star disclosed. "Country music, you know, there's a new song practically every day. It's hard to pick a favorite. But as of right now, I'd say Craig Morgan is my favorite. He's got a song, 'Almost Home,' that's just beautiful."

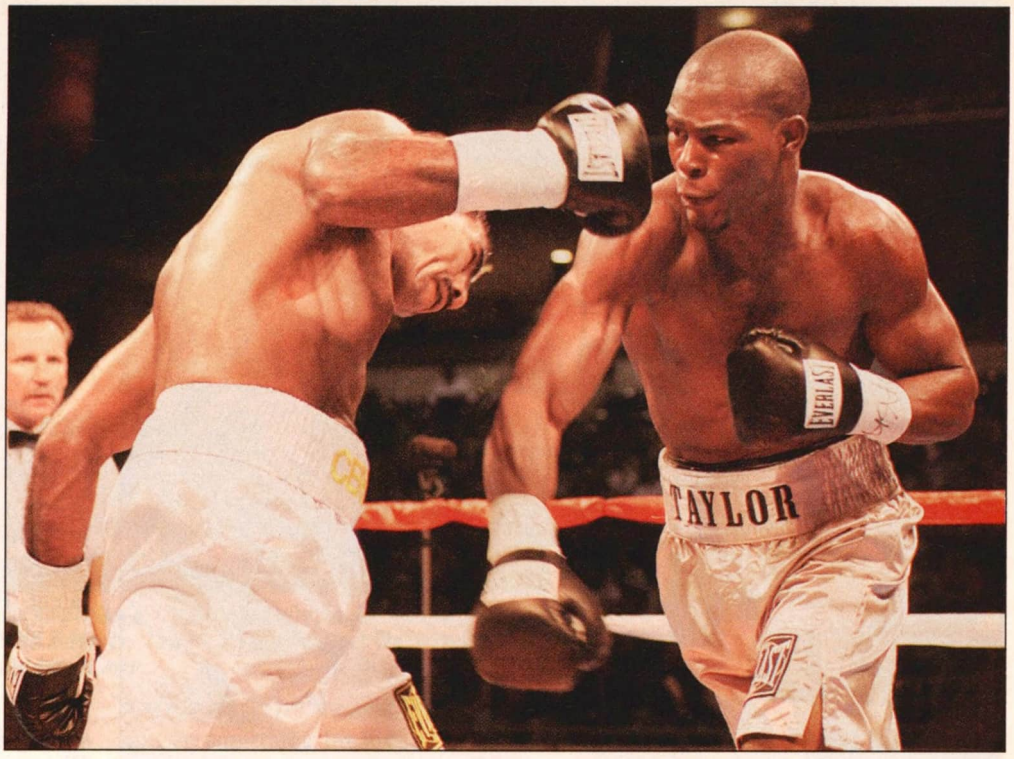
The song's title could serve as the theme to Taylor's budding boxing career. When he trains in Miami, he's almost home. When he enters the ring on fight night, he's almost home.

Boxing is Taylor's life, has earned him early riches, and is the reason he spurned a lifelong dream of wearing Arkansas Razorbacks red and white. But boxing also made Taylor a road warrior, even as an amateur, when he would pile into trainer Ozell Nelson's pickup and journey days at a time in pursuit of sparring.

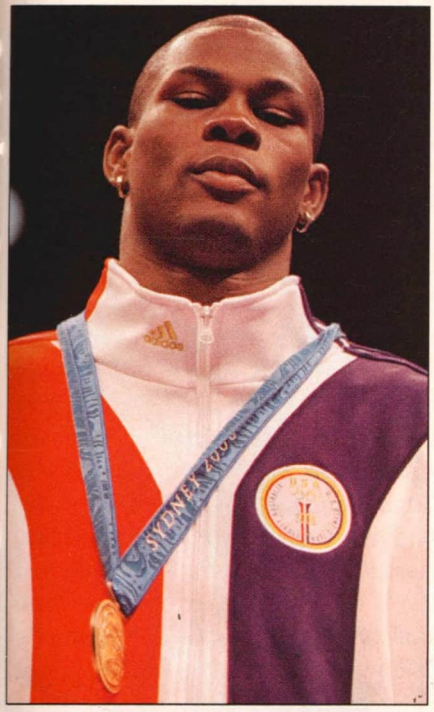
In a few years, his boxing career will end, and Taylor will reach his final destination, which is right where he began.

"Home always comes first," Taylor said. "It's wonderful here. Arkansas isn't that big, and the people here love me. As long as I keep my head on straight, I think I can be a hero in Arkansas."

Midway through the third year of his professional career, Taylor has emerged as the leader of the plodding 2000 U.S. Olympic class, with Arkansas as his backdrop. It is more than his home base. It is his source of personal grounding.



With 32 knockouts among his 35 wins, Cervera came to win and unleashed plenty of powerpunches in Taylor's direction. But the man from Arkansas proved too fast, too slick, and ultimately too powerful.



A somewhat perplexed looking Taylor shows off the bronze medal he won at the 2000 Olympics. So far, Taylor is the most advanced member of the boxing team that represented the United States at the Sydney Games.

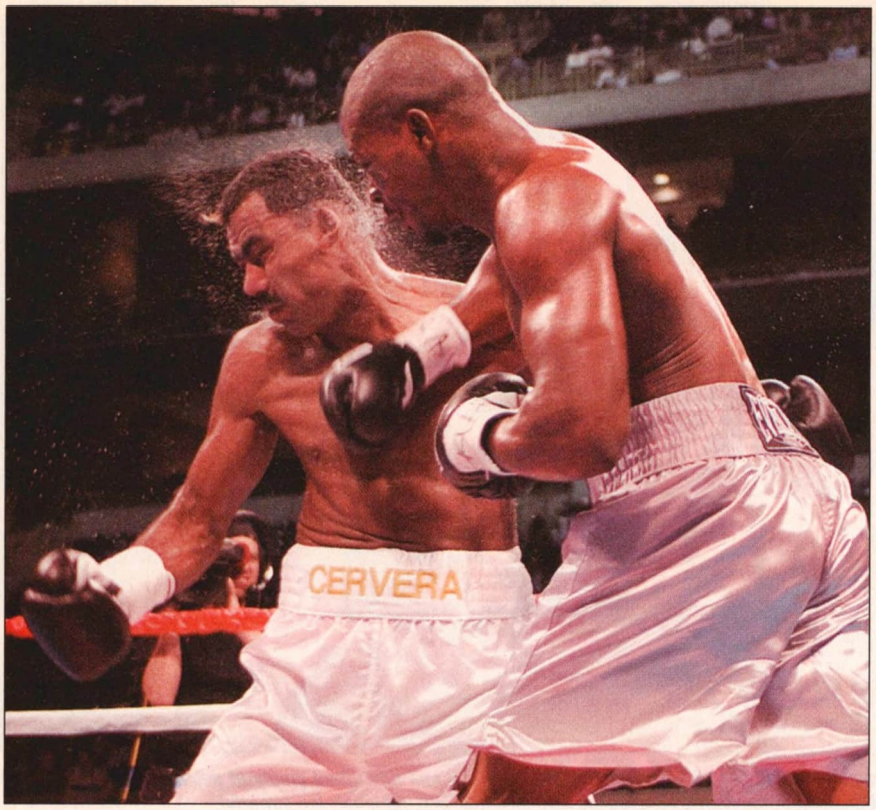
So much of his history is wrapped up in the place—and not all of it glorious, by any means—that the two have become inseparable. Love of home developed through a childhood he admits was "rough." Taylor's father left when he was barely out of diapers. Home was a classic single-parent revolving door, with Taylor's mother leaving for a 3-11 p.m. swing shift at a nursing home just as the kids arrived home from school. Carlois Reynolds always left dinner on the stove for her five children. The eldest took control from there, and, "rationed it out to everybody, made sure everybody had enough to eat."

There also was enough personal tragedy to fill these pages alone. On November 9, 1998, a teenaged Jermain Taylor, already identified as a future Olympic favorite, was driving to the home of his beloved maternal grandmother, Gussie Robinson. He arrived to the sight of police cruisers, ambulances, and yellow tape. Gussie Robinson's throat had been slit. Worse, her own son immediately was identified as the suspect.

"I got to the house, and they told me my Uncle Joe had killed our grandmother," Taylor recalled. "I walked in the house and saw all the blood. It really hit me. I couldn't take it. I just got in my car and left. But I couldn't cry. I didn't cry until, on the day of the wake, a man outside the house was cracking a joke, something about, 'How many dead people are there in a funeral home?' It made me so angry. Me and my cousins, we went off on the guy. I couldn't cry until that moment. After that, I cried like a baby."

Ahmad Al-Genius lived a troubled life. He changed his name from Joe Brown while serving 16 years of a 35-year sentence for battery and robbery. His mother lobbied for his parole. Family members can only guess what happened that fateful day. They speculate that Al-Genius was on drugs. But they'll never know. The day after the murder, when police went to arrest Al-Genius, the 35-year-old drank from a stashed bottle of hydrochloric acid—but not before, according to the police report, admitting his guilt. He died the next day, two days after his mother.

"He loved her," Taylor said, his voice escalating. "That's what I don't



Taylor exploded in the fourth round, blasting Cervera to the floor three times before referee Rick Steigerwald stopped the bout at the 2:37 mark. According to CompuBox, Taylor landed 114 punches overall, compared to just 26 for Cervera.

understand. He took the easy way out. I just wanted to know why."

Taylor, fresh off a third-place finish in the 1998 Goodwill Games, placed his bronze medal in his grandmother's casket.

Another uncle, now in prison, tries to communicate with his famous nephew. Taylor, still raging at the senseless murder, will not respond.

"I can't even talk to my Uncle Joe's brother," Taylor said. "He tries to call the house and talk to me. I can't see myself ever talking to him. I feel like he's no different than Joe, even though he may be totally different. But I'll never give him the chance to make that distinction."

Taylor funneled his anger into boxing. He was told to take some time off, but Nelson recalls that Taylor immediately returned to training, with more passion than before.

Today, Taylor, 16-0 (12), verges on a professional breakthrough. His May 17 victory over Nicholas Cervera on the Paul Spadafora-Leonard Dorin undercard in Pittsburgh was the latest example. Cervera, 35-4-1 (32), never had been knocked out. But Taylor floored Cervera three times in the decisive fourth round, in three different fashions—a hook-cross combination, a jab, and a decisive single hook.

The second knockdown was Taylor's first with a jab since his amateur days. On the last knockdown, Taylor, who never spent a single moment on the ropes until then, lured Cervera into a neutral corner for the coup de grace, which was delivered with his back to the ropes at 2:37 of the fourth.

"I baited him. I pulled him right into the corner," Taylor said. "He was fighting on instinct, and the most dangerous position a fighter can be in is when he doesn't know what he's going to throw—you know, but he doesn't. I let him throw his wild shots and I just timed him."

The HBO announcers were effusive. Larry Merchant said Taylor, "is more than a prospect right now, he's simply a very good young fighter." And Emanuel Steward proclaimed that after three more fights, Taylor would be a "serious threat" to middleweight king Bernard Hopkins.

No one is rushing for a Hopkins-Taylor fight. But if Hopkins abdicates in conjunction with his decision to face cruiserweight champion James Toney, Taylor's timetable will be stepped up considerably.

"If he goes up, it's open for everybody, and I want one of those belts. If he goes up, it's going to happen fast," Taylor said.

Promoter Lou DiBella, who signed Taylor out of the Olympics, is more reserved. He contends Taylor is too precious a commodity to rush, and in a division dominated by thirtysomethings, Taylor stands out as the premier young talent. Hopkins might not be in DiBella's plans within two or three fights. But someone such as Fernando Vargas or William Joppy may be.

"When Jermain came out of the Olympics, I felt like he might be a Secretariat—but Secretariat as a two-year-old," DiBella said. "He was a little awkward, and he needed to get his professional legs under him. Now, I feel like he's beginning his three-year-old campaign. That's about where we are with him right now.

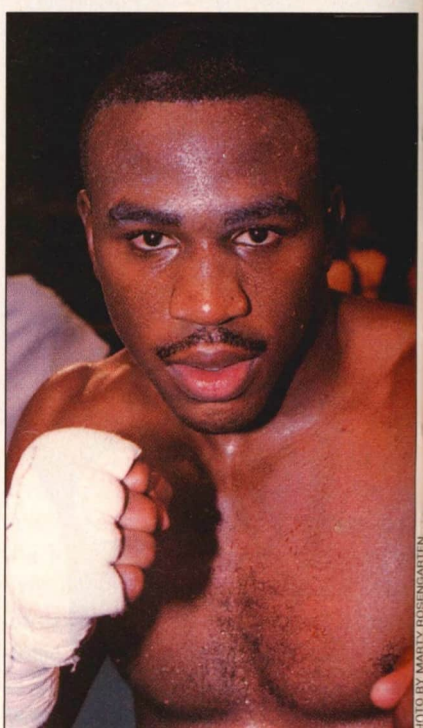


PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

Olympic teammate and friend Jeff Lacy (pictured) has said that he would be willing to fight Taylor, providing the money's right.

PHOTO BY TEDDY BLACKBURN

In his fifth pro fight, Taylor fought in his hometown of Little Rock, Arkansas, for the first time as a pro, beating Efrain Garcia by fifth-round stoppage. Taylor, a huge Arkansas Razorbacks fan, is proud to be putting his home state on the boxing map.

"He was a very raw talent coming out of the Olympics, and even though that is great clay to mold, you never know how a kid will react after he turns pro. He has made all the right moves. Win, lose, or draw, he has handled his career the right way. He has stayed humble, he has done what his handlers insist, he has stayed busy, and he didn't always want Olympian-type money. I've already provided more fights for him than our contract called for, because he realized it would be better to have more fights, and take a little less money, and get the experience.

"And it's nice to hear, 'Yes sir,' and, 'No sir.' It isn't mandatory. But it's nice to see a kid who says, 'Thank you,' naturally."

Manager Mark Vaz agreed to put Taylor into a pair of 2002 off-contract fights in Tulsa, Oklahoma, because he wanted his young fighter to get off-television experience against left-handers. Taylor dispatched both opponents quickly, but Vaz contends the fights were important to his career advancement.

In their three years together, Vaz has developed an appreciation for Taylor's loyalty.

"If he wasn't an Olympian, and was just a guy making $100 a round, I would still want to work with Jermain," Vaz said. "He's one of the few people—in boxing or anything else—who, when you do something for him, is genuinely grateful."

Taylor's loyalty is evidenced in his corner. Pat Burns joined up as co-trainer when Taylor turned pro, but only after Taylor and Nelson consulted.

"I had only dealt with amateur guys," Nelson said. "There really aren't any pros in Arkansas. I had brought Jermain a long way. But I always understood that pros and amateurs were two different ballgames, and I needed some help. So while Pat teaches Jermain, I'm also picking Pat's brain, and learning myself."

Ray Rodgers, an Arkansas boxing legend, is Taylor's cutman. It wasn't just a hometown hire. Rodgers has worked with many top fighters, including Tommy Morrison and Wayne McCullough. Rodgers once worked an Iran Barkley title fight against Henry Maske after which Barkley took 63 facial stitches—yet, remarkably, the fight wasn't stopped on cuts.

"Even at my age, and as jaded as I am, let me tell you what, Jermain Taylor has got the goods," said the 66-year-old Rodgers. "Jermain Taylor is the genuine article, both mentally and physically."

Taylor's wide-ranging athleticism became evident during high school. He still holds Little Rock McClellan High's 400-meter school record of 48.7 sec-

onds. Scholarship offers poured in, though the University of Arkansas, home to the nation's premier college track program, had the only chance—which is to say, no chance at all.

"I'm a Razorback, man. I don't even like football, but when the Razorbacks are on, I can't turn away. If I was going to run track, I was going to be a Razorback. But my love was boxing. Boxing is all I wanted to do," Taylor said.

Taylor met Nelson in 1991, three years after Nelson opened the Arkansas Boxing Club. Two months into his training, 13-year-old Taylor sparred the first time, against Nelson's son, Lendrick.

"I got in the ring and got the crap beat out of me. But you know what? At the same time, I loved it," Taylor said. "My coach told me if I stuck with it, I'd be beating his son in six months time. I thought that was crazy. But I stuck with it, and in six months time, I was beating his son with one hand."

Taylor's mother objected to her son's newfound athletic interest.

"Jermain's mother made him quit when he was 13 years old," Nelson recalled. "He came to me and said, 'Coach, please talk to my mama.' So I talked to her, but she was dead-set against Jermain boxing, period. I told her, 'Jermain has got to do something, or these streets are going to eat him up. Look at the crowd he's running with. Look at the colors they're all wearing.'"

Too many of Taylor's friends were wearing the red garb favored by the notorious Bloods gang, which infiltrated turf-divided Little Rock in the late-1980s.

Soon enough, Carlois Reynolds relented.

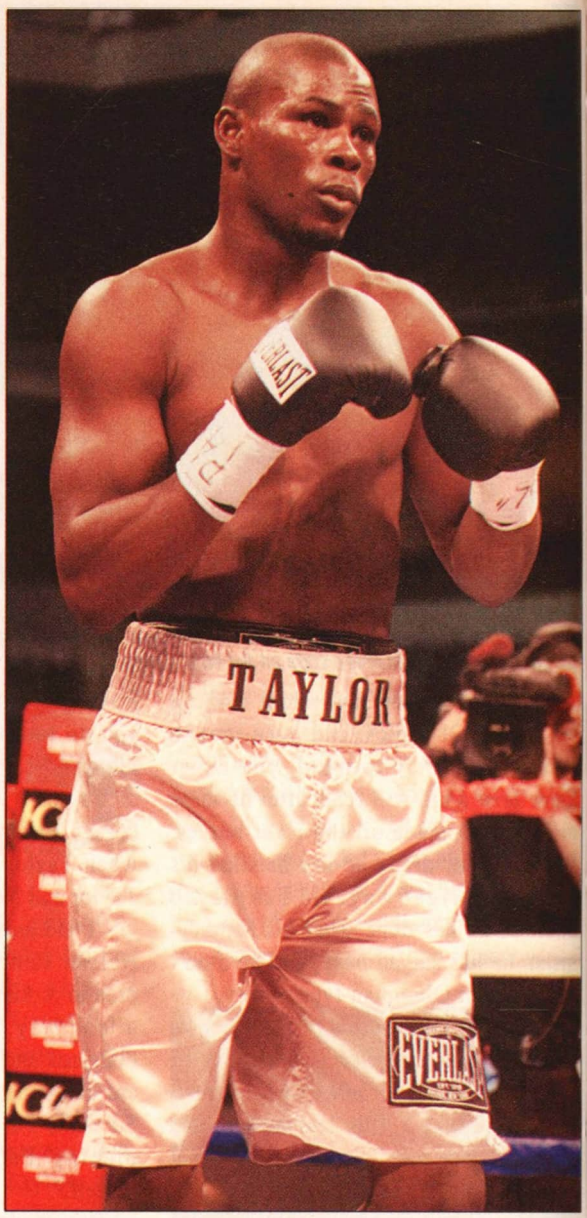
"One day, I was driving in my car, and she flagged me down," Nelson said. "She just told me, 'Take him.'"

There was never any doubt Nelson would play a major role in Taylor's pro career.

"The most important thing you can do is keep the people who got you there close to you," Taylor said. "You have to have those people with you all the way. That's all there is to it. [Nelson] taught me to be a man. He would take me places for a couple weeks at a time for sparring, because there really wasn't any sparring for me in Arkansas, and we would stay together. And I would stay at his house sometimes. I learned from him. He took time from his family, and gave that time to me. He didn't have to take the time out to do the things he did. But he did it out of love."

To say the boxing public is awaiting the emergence of the 2000 Olympians is a gross understatement. By comparison, the 1996 class, three years after Atlanta, already had produced three title claimants (Floyd Mayweather, David Reid, and Vargas), and another on the cusp of a title (Eric Morel).

Super middleweight Jeff Lacy is among those who, along with Taylor, has stepped to the forefront of their class. Three years ago, they made a five-dollar bet over who would score the most knockouts in the Sydney Olympics. They tied, with one apiece, though Taylor went home with a bronze medal, and Lacy left empty-handed.



Taylor appears to have a bright future ahead of him, and if middleweight champion Bernard Hopkins moves up to cruiserweight and stays there, Taylor could be the heir to the 160-pound throne.

They will set aside personal friendship for far more cash if a mega-fight should emerge someday.

"Actually, me and Jeff have talked about fighting," Taylor said, "and we both were like, 'Man, if the money's right, lets do it!' Jeff and I were roommates at the Olympic training center. You have to realize, we worked together, played together, talked until 2 o'clock in the morning about boxing together. That's my friend. But if the money's right, hell yes, we'd both do it."

In the interim, Lacy has some catching up to do. Taylor's victory over Cervera vaulted him into the number eight position in THE RING'S middleweight ratings, making him the first member of his Olympic class to crack the top 10, and giving him something else to croon about when cruising around Little Rock in his pride and joy.

"Oh, man, that makes me feel good," Taylor said upon hearing the news. "To have your name up there with the greats just shows me it's all starting to come together." ■

David Mayo covers boxing for the Grand Rapids (Michigan) Press and is a regular contributor to this magazine.

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Winner will be determined by comparing individual sweepstakes numbers on all eligible entries received with the pre-selected winning number. Selection of winning number will be conducted under the supervision of an independent auditing firm and an independent judging organization whose decisions are final. If the winning number is returned, winner notification will be made on or about 4/30/04. IF WINNING NUMBER IS NOT RETURNED, PRIZE WILL NOT BE AWARDED. Sweepstakes open to legal U.S. residents (except residents of Florida and Texas), and to residents of Canada and other countries where offered and permitted by law. Void in Florida, Texas and where prohibited by law.

CONSUMER DISCLOSURES: You have not yet won. No purchase necessary. One prize of $1,000,000, if claimed, will be awarded as an annuity of 30 installments of $33,333.34, or winner may choose $475,000 lump sum cash instead of annuity. Current value of annuity as of 08/12/02 was $475,000. Odds of winning are 1 in 120 million. Sweepstakes registered by Ventura Associates, Inc., 1040 6th Ave., NY, NY 10018 & may be presented in different creative presentations by different organizations. Sweepstakes ends 1/16/04.

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SCA, Ventura Associates and any of the Sweepstakes Presenters are not liable for payment of any prize to entrants who have violated these official rules.

For the name of the winner, available after 7/30/04 (if prize is claimed), send self-addressed, stamped envelope by 5/31/04 to: Super Million X Winner, P. O. Box 5772, Ellenton, FL 34222-5007.

PRIZE FANTASY SWEEPSTAKES

Winner(s) of prizes below will be selected from among all eligible entries received in random drawings conducted on or about 5/31/04 by Ventura Associates, Inc., whose decisions are final. All prizes guaranteed to be awarded. Sweepstakes open to legal U.S. residents and to residents of Canada & other countries where offered & permitted by law. Void where prohibited by law. For a list of major winners, available after 7/30/04, send self-addressed, stamped envelope by 5/31/04 to: "Prize Fantasy Sweepstakes" Winners, PO Box 5383, Ellenton, FL 34222-5003.

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Any winner will be notified in writing within 2 weeks of selection. Winner may be required (at judges' discretion) to sign & return an Affidavit of Eligibility/Liability Release, & where legally permissible, a Publicity Release within 14 days of date on notification. Acceptance of a prize by a minor will require execution by parent or legal guardian of required documentation. Costs for goods or services not specified are winner's responsibility. No substitution of prizes except by Sponsor due to unavailability. Except where prohibited by law, winners consent to use of their names, hometowns, prizes won & likenesses for promotional purposes on behalf of all presenters without additional compensation. Void where prohibited by law. All federal, state, provincial & local laws & regulations apply. Prize values in U. S. currency. No transfer or assignment of prize permitted. Winners responsible for all taxes on prizes. U.S. laws govern all aspects of this sweepstakes.

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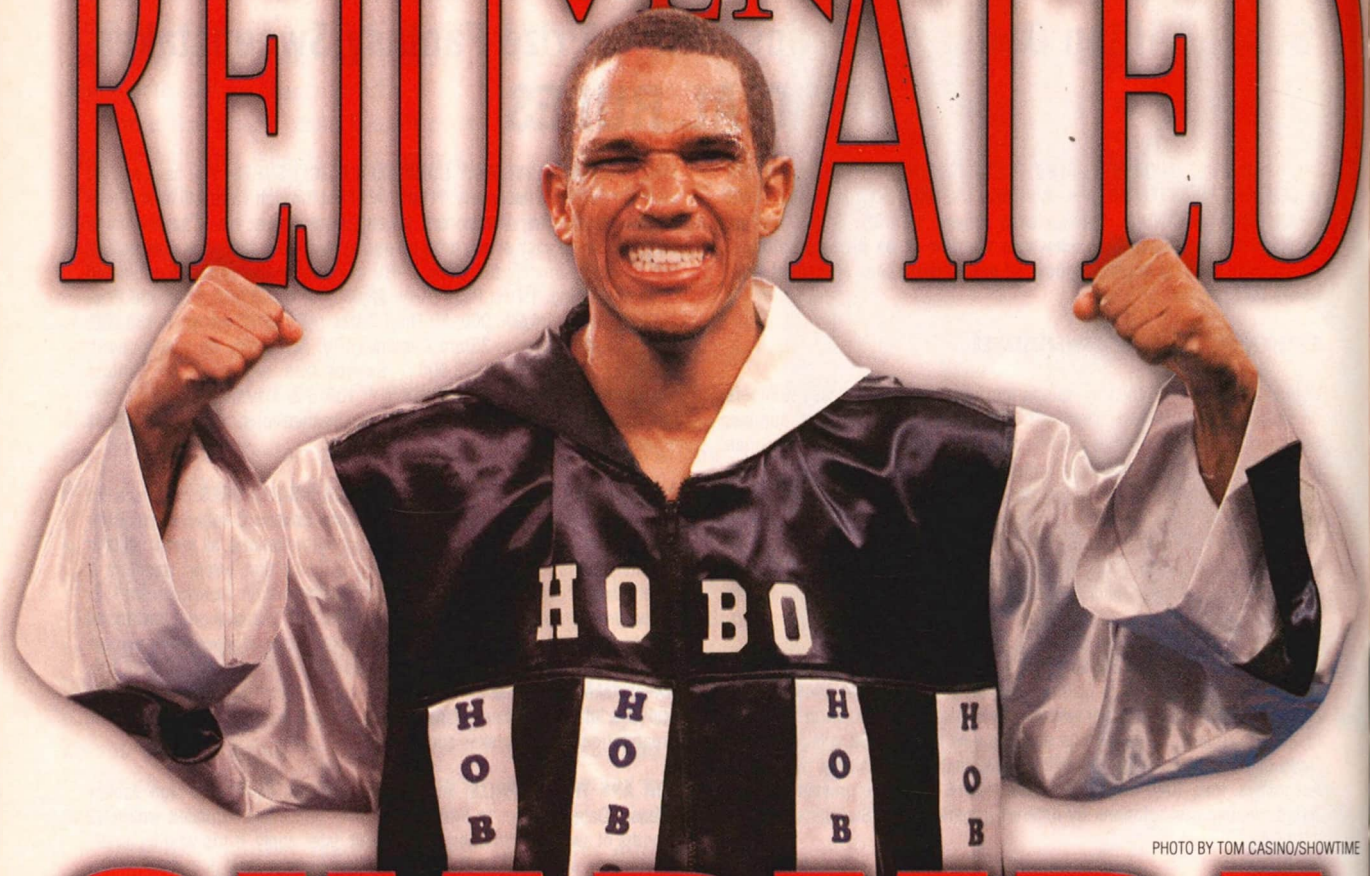


PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

SHARMBA MITCHELL

By Mike Houser

Perhaps Sharmba Mitchell can relate to what 19th-century Spanish violinist and composer Pablo Sarasate once said when a critic hailed him as a genius: "A genius! For 37 years I practiced 14 hours a day, and now they call me a genius!"

While he may not have been practicing 14 hours a day, the 32-year-old Mitchell has nonetheless toiled away as a boxer for over 24 years. On the heels of his May 17 masterpiece against fellow top junior welterweight Ben "Wonder" Tackie in Reno, Nevada—a fight that has been drawing Mitchell critical acclaim from many boxing pundits—the former WBA super lightweight king now finds himself possibly only one fight away from realizing pound-for-pound recognition.

Standing in Mitchell's way is the man who took his belt in a February 3, 2001, title unification bout: undisputed world junior welterweight champion Kostya Tszyu, who is number five on THE RING's pound-for-pound list. Tszyu walked away with a seventh-round TKO victory after a knee injury ended Mitchell's night.

"Tszyu's promoter, Vlad Warton, called to ask for our official approval," said Jay Larkin, senior vice president of sports and events for Showtime. "There

His Second Wind Is Not Just Hot Air

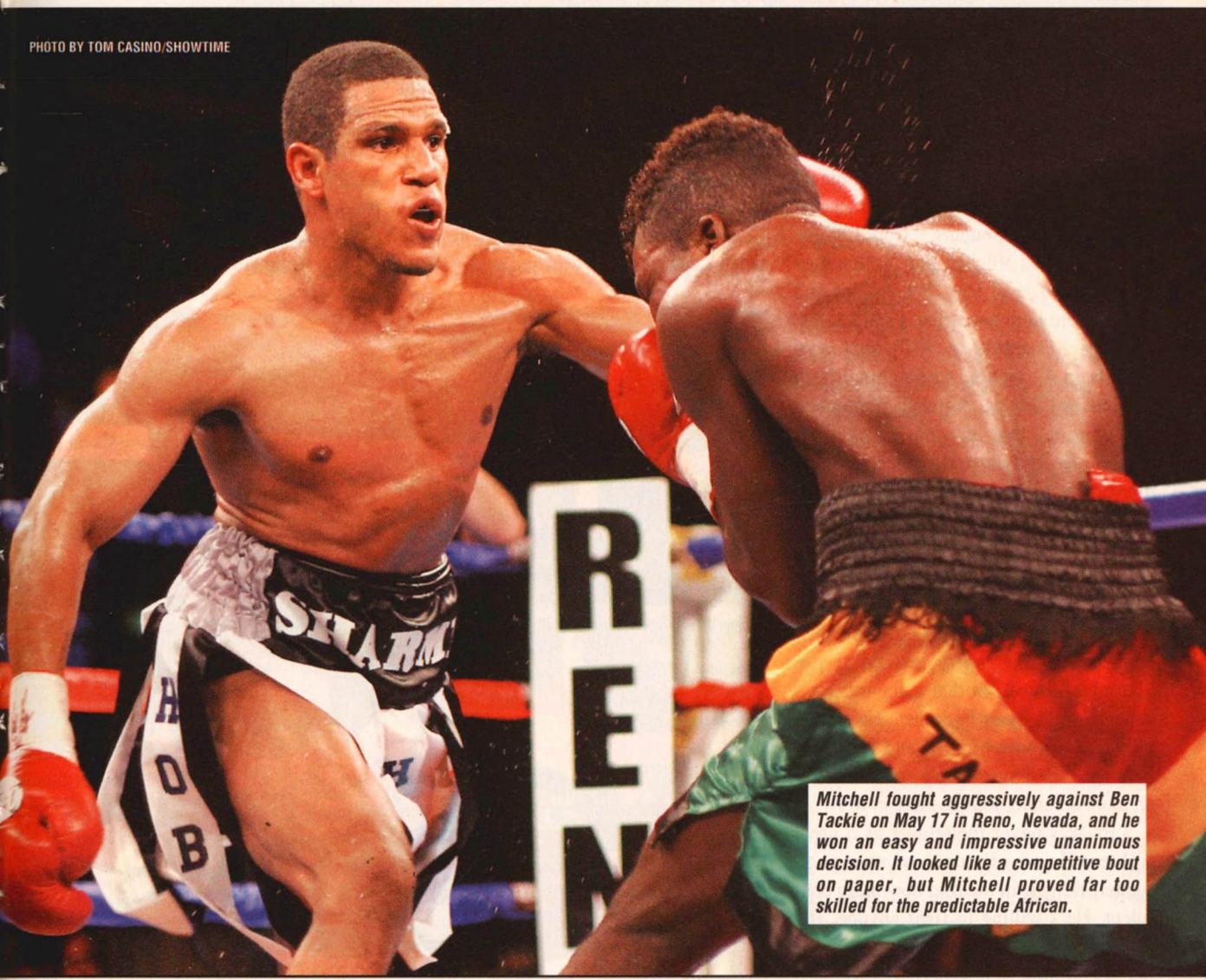
seems to be a willingness on the part of Tszyu's people that was not there before to have a rematch with Mitchell."

That willingness may be in no small part due to Mitchell's superlative performance against the rugged Tackie, who until Mitchell put him down in the 11th round with a left cross, had never before tasted the canvas—not even against Tszyu, who defended his championship against Tackie on May 18 of last year.

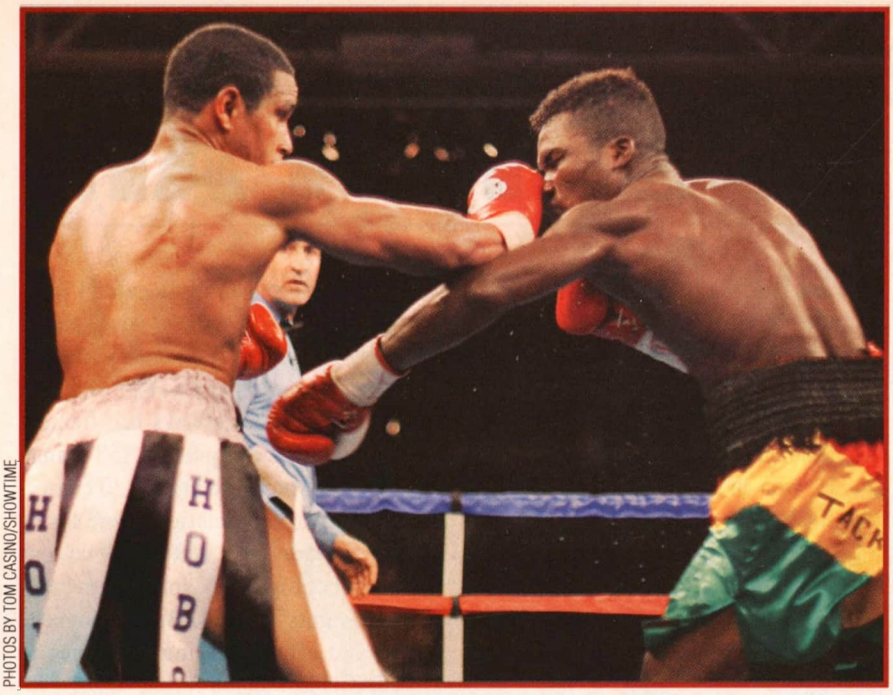
Against Tackie, Mitchell faced not only a non-stop opponent with an iron chin, but also Reno's rarified 4,500-foot altitude. Mitchell took both opponents head-on, letting his hands go with blinding combinations and moving and dancing on his toes at a rate that would have taken the starch out of a fighter half his age. He won an easy decision by scores of 119-108 (twice) and 118-109.

"I was surprised at his condition at that altitude," said Gary Shaw, Mitchell's promoter. "I was nervous about it before the fight. It was a masterful performance."

But it's more than just a case of looking great for one fight. For some reason it's easy to overlook Mitchell's success, which goes back many years. Mitchell, now 52-3 (30), has always had tremendous skill. After compiling a 153-7 amateur record, Mitchell blazed to 30 consecutive professional victories before losing to Leavander Johnson and future two-time lightweight titlist Stevie Johnston in back-to-back fights in 1994. But he bounced back, and after traveling to France to unseat Khalid Rahilou for the WBA 140-



Mitchell fought aggressively against Ben Tackie on May 17 in Reno, Nevada, and he won an easy and impressive unanimous decision. It looked like a competitive bout on paper, but Mitchell proved far too skilled for the predictable African.



PHOTOS BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

The slick Mitchell catches Tackie coming in with a right hand (above), and would use a pair of left hands in the 11th round to put Tackie down for the first time in his career (below). Mitchell had also wobbled Tackie in the fourth, showing ample power to go with his long-acknowledged speed.

pound belt, Mitchell made four successful defenses before losing to Tszyu.

Following his 2001 reconstructive knee surgery, Mitchell has looked better than ever. He has been especially impressive in the way he's stepped it up against his last three opponents. "Cool" Vince Phillips, Carlos Vilches, and Tackie may not be Tszyu-level foes, but Phillips and Tackie were both borderline top-10 types, and Vilches came in with only two defeats in 42 fights. And against both Vilches and Tackie, Mitchell obliterated any opinions that he's not an exciting fighter. He has abruptly re-established himself in the consciousness of the boxing world and made his age a non-issue.

"He's gotten better—like wine," Shaw said. "Some fighters are a rare breed. Like Evander Holyfied and Oscar De La Hoya. People thought they peaked, then they came back and *really* peaked. I put Sharmba Mitchell in that category. He's better now than way back then. He's mentally at ease with himself and his team. He's aged. He's smarter. He appears quicker, more accurate, and has more power.

"He was never thought of as a great fighter. He was thought of as a good fighter. He gets in the ring now more confident. He's willing to fight anyone. His devastating kayo of Vilches … that was one of the quickest uppercuts I've seen thrown. I have all the respect in the world for Tackie, and Sharmba knocked him down."

So what is Mitchell's explanation for seemingly finding the key to instant respect and the fountain of youth?

"Maybe I'm picking up my second wind. I don't know," Mitchell said. "I'm a lot smarter now. I'm smarter as a person and growing up as a man. I feel I've now got the strength to go with the slickness, movement, and speed. I used to have long layoffs between fights. Training was more about losing weight than skills. Now, I'm staying in shape and working on boxing. I bought a new house with a steam room, Jacuzzi, and gym. I can see the results. I'm not burned out. I see the final things that can happen for me in my career."

Mitchell is now talking about his boxing future in finite terms and has formulated a plan that, if he can accomplish it, could see him retire as one of the best in the sport.

"I want to go out in style," Mitchell said. "I want to go out as a champion and know that I reached all of my goals. I want to get my title back, so that I'm a two-time champ. Then I want to move up to 147 and then 154. One fight for a belt at each weight."

It all starts with Tszyu, who had been showing a disinclination to give Mitchell a rematch and instead stated his desire to challenge IBF welterweight titlist Cory Spinks.

"With Tszyu, my body failed me," said Mitchell, who most observers felt was roughly even with Tszyu at the time of the stoppage following a rough-and-

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

Despite outboxing Kostya Tszyu and building an early lead when they fought in February '01, Mitchell suffered a seventh-round TKO loss due to a combination of Tszyu's relentless pressure and his own injured knee. A shot at revenge against the world 140-pound champ is tops on Mitchell's wish list.

tumble match that saw Tszyu throw Mitchell down on numerous occasions. "I want this fight bad. I really believe it can happen. I've taken all the steps to make it happen. One way or another, he'll end up fighting me. I'll track him down no matter where he goes."

How about to Moscow, Russia?

Larkin said Moscow is currently being bandied about as a venue for the Tszyu-Mitchell rematch because, as talented as Tszyu is, he just can't seem to draw fans in the United States.

"It would not only be a fun event, it would be a large-scale event," Larkin said. "It would be a massive hometown crowd for Kostya. There would be 30,000 screaming Russians. It'd make for good television."

A fight of this magnitude has never taken place in the former Soviet Union. It would make the February 2001 IBF cruiserweight title battle between Vassiliy Jirov and Alex Gonzalez in Alma-Ata, Kazakhstan, pale in comparison. It might register more along the lines of Rocky Balboa-Ivan Drago.

"Sharmba Mitchell would be walking into the lion's den," Larkin acknowledged. "Tszyu's already beaten him. It's a major shot for him. If we offer it and Sharmba turns it down, he'll have to get back in line again. The challenger has to make concessions."

Mitchell's dream fight suddenly has the potential to take on the qualities of a nightmare.

"Russia? Hey, it's still the Soviet Union. I don't feel comfortable over there," Mitchell said. "I want to be able to know that I can come home. I'm not going to Russia unless it's for a lotta, lotta money."

In addition to the dollars, the issue also involves a little sense.

"If we have to go to Russia to get the title back, we'll do it as long as there's an even playing field," Shaw said. "We'll resolve the judges issue before we get on the plane."

But before Mitchell sets himself up in an isolated training camp somewhere in Siberia, he should note that Larkin said Tszyu has yet to confirm plans to fight in the country of his birth, though his adopted country—Australia—is still in the running.

"Melbourne would still be a big event," said Larkin of the city where Tszyu drew almost 30,000 fans for his January title defense against Jesse James Leija. "Sharmba is an exciting fighter. If anybody possesses the skills to give Kostya a hard time, it's Mitchell. He's fast and he's a lefty—which Kostya doesn't like. Sharmba was giving him all he could handle in their first fight. He was frustrating Tszyu. He was certainly competitive. On the other hand, Tszyu was not in danger of being stopped. You have to outbox Tszyu. His loss to Vince Phillips aside, you can't stop him with a truck if Kostya wants it bad enough."

Mitchell said he's not opposed to going to Australia, but, as with a fight in Russia, he'd have to see adequate dollar signs.

No matter where the fight takes place, this is one match Mitchell needs to cement his legacy, which wasn't even worth discussing until he mowed through Vilches and Tackie. Even though Mitchell possessed abundant skills, he was suffering from Roy Jones and Floyd Mayweather Syndrome: Without displaying knockout power and with his opponents often far below him in skill, his bouts

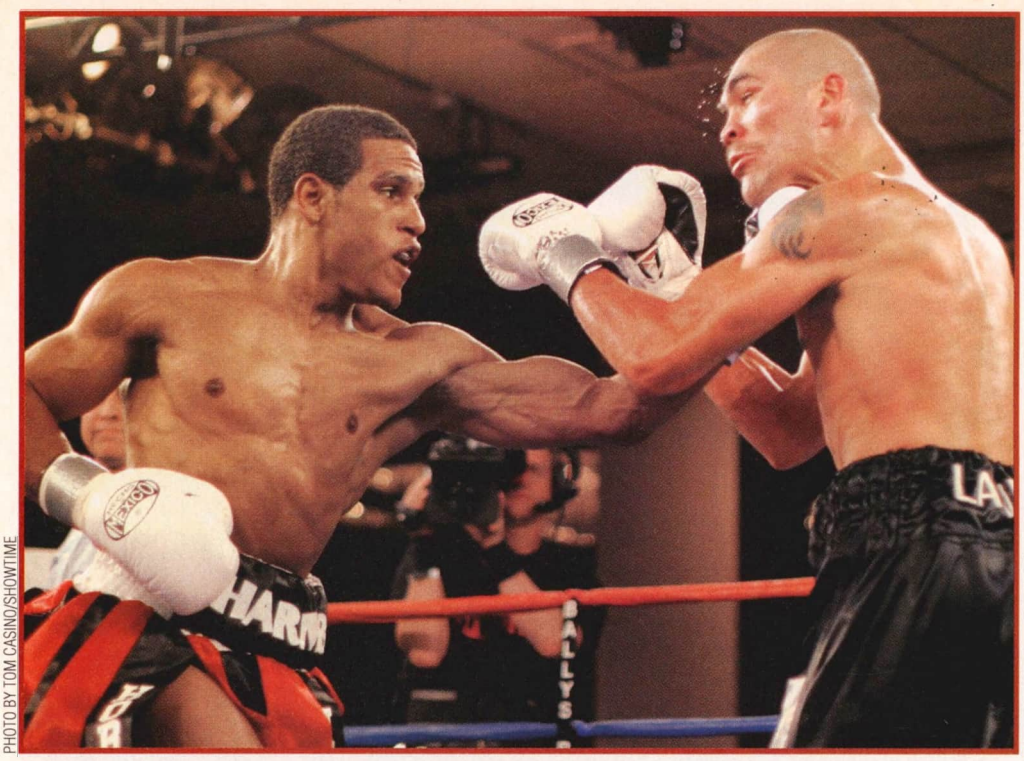


PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

In his previous bout before outpointing Tackie, Mitchell overwhelmed Carlos Vilches and scored his first knockout in 10 fights. As in the Tackie fight, Mitchell showed power and aggression against the overmatched Argentine.

were predictable and boring. But unlike Jones and Mayweather, Mitchell was never thought of as an all-time great fighter.

The knockout of Vilches and the combination of power and speed that he exhibited against Tackie have put him in a position to change all of that.

And consider that Tszyu has fought only twice since knocking out Zab Judah for the undisputed championship in November 2001. Judah, a speedy southpaw like Mitchell, rocked Tszyu early in round one. Even Leija, an older, much slower-fisted fighter than Mitchell, was bouncing enough right hands off of Tszyu's chin to raise more than a few eyebrows in boxing circles.

If Mitchell can repeat against Tszyu the performance he had against Tackie by staying on his toes, throwing blizzards of blinding-fast punches, and not allowing Tszyu to make it a wrestling match like their first encounter, he has a very good chance of accomplishing the first leg of his three-step program of retiring on top.

"This time Tszyu will face a different Sharmba," Shaw said. "Tszyu won't be able to throw him around like a rag doll. The ref will take control of this fight."

Being top gun in boxing's deepest division would give Mitchell a plethora of options. Mitchell says he has no interest in meeting his friend and WBO junior welterweight titlist DeMarcus Corley, but bouts with Arturo Gatti, Judah, Ricky Hatton, or Vivian Harris would make for interesting viewing.

While Mitchell is likely too seasoned for the division's young guns—up-and-comers such as Muhammad Abdullaev, Miguel Cotto, Oscar Diaz, and Panchito Bojado—a matchup with fellow defensive wizard and lightweight champion Mayweather is still another possibility.

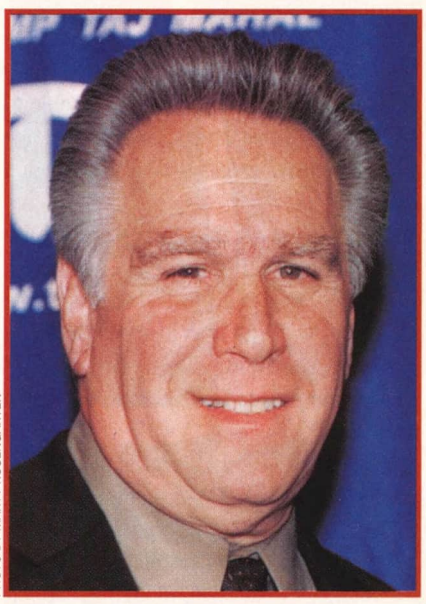


PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

Mitchell's new promoter, Gary Shaw, believes that Mitchell is just now hitting his peak at age 32. Shaw is working on a rematch with Tszyu, but is hesitant to do it in Russia.

And if Mitchell wants to stick with his three-and-done plan, meetings with either headhunter Ricardo Mayorga or rangy Vernon Forrest at welterweight would silence even the harshest Mitchell critic.

Mitchell's plan isn't completely out of line. It's at least more plausible than Mayweather's plan to jump up 19 pounds to face De La Hoya at 154. In fact, if Mitchell has an impressive victory over Tszyu and one at welterweight, it would create an attractive possibility for "The Golden Boy," who'd have to like his chances against the lighter Mitchell. If undisputed middleweight champ Bernard Hopkins abandons the 160-pound class for good after his fight with James Toney, the list of worthy foes for De La Hoya's planned late-2004 fight might be short enough to put Mitchell in a prime position. There are, of course, quite a few "ifs" in the plan, but none of it is beyond the realm of possibility.

With only a few scars to serve as reminders that he has been a pro since he was 18, Mitchell still looks like a young man in his mid-20s, something the suddenly hot boxer from Washington, D.C., is proud of.

"I don't have to stay around too long," said Mitchell, who attended Howard and the University of Maryland and has said he has invested his money well. "When you set yourself up in life and have something to fall back on, you don't have to do that."

In boxing, it's not always how a fighter starts his career that matters most. How he finishes can be even more important. Especially if he beats the game, and doesn't let the game beat him. ■

Mike Houser is a boxing columnist for the Nevada Appeal.

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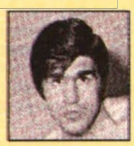

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Jan. 1985: Holmes-Bonecrusher Color Action. Plus: Gerry Cooney, pro debuts (Breland, Hill, Taylor, Biggs, Whitaker, Holyfield), Santos-Medal, Meza-Garza.

Feb. 1985: Showdown: Page Clobbers Coetzee For WBA Title. Plus: Larry Holmes, lightweights, Cooney-Chaplin, McCallum-Minchillo.

March 1985: Thomas Hearns—Fighter Of The Year. Plus: Annual ratings, Fight, Upset, Round, Comeback, and Prospect of the Year.

May 1985: The Rematch In Reno: Bramble-Mancini Color Action. Plus: Donald Curry, Aaron Pryor, McGuigan-LaPorte.

June 1985: Holmes' Last Hurrah? Holmes-Bey Color Action. Plus: Holmes vs. all-time greats, Paul-Arroyo, 1901.

Aug. 1985: Seven Elected To THE RING Hall Of Fame (Jose Napoles, Jake LaMotta, Panama Al Brown, Manuel Ortiz, Young Stribling, Thomas Jackling, Lord Lonsdale). Plus: Spinks-Holmes preview, Barry McGuigan.

Oct. 1985: The "Macho Man" Rides Again. Plus: Jeff Fenech, Berbick-Green, John E. Garcia, Dwight Muhammad Qawi, McCallum-Braxton.

Nov. 1985: Will Hagler Feast On The Beast? Plus: Hagler-Mugabi & Hearns-Shuler previews, Lonnie Smith, Pintor-Meza, Chuck Hull, Benitez-Moley.

Dec. 1985: Michael Spinks: Against All Odds. Plus: Curry-McCrory preview, McGuigan-Taylor, Alexis Arguello, Michael Olajide, Chavez-Pratchett.

Jan. 1986: In Search Of A Heavyweight Champion. Plus: Azumah Nelson, Arguello-Jefferson, Olympic update, Chicago boxing.

May 1986: Hagler vs. Mugabi: Marvelous Marvin Tames The Beast. Plus: Marvin Johnson, McGuigan-Cabrera, Bramble-Crawley, Tyson-Ferguson, 10 worst decisions.

June 1986: Barry's Back In The USA: McGuigan Breathes A Breath Of Fresh Air Into American Fight Scene. Plus: Bobby Czyz, Robbie Sims, Qawi-Holyfield preview, Berbick-Thomas, Bruno-Coetzee.

July 1986: Spinks-Holmes II: Who Really Won? Plus: Frank Bruno, Richie Sandoval, Kevin Watts, Tyson-Tillis, Boza-Edwards-Alli, Johnson-Burns.

Aug. 1986: Is Sugar Ray Still Sweet? Plus: Lloyd Honeyghan, Tyson-Green, Cooney-Gregg, Hall of Fame (Eder Jofre, Benny Lynch, Bud Taylor, Sam McVey, Nat Langham, John Chambers), Bernardo Pinango.

Sept. 1986: Gerry Cooney vs. Mike Tyson: Who Would Win? Plus: Cruz-McGuigan, Hearns-Medal, Tyson-Gross, Sims-Duran.

Dec. 1986: The Weekend That Shook The Boxing World. Rosario-Bramble & Honeyghan-Curry. Plus: Butch Lewis interview, Buster Drayton, Hector Camacho, Jake LaMotta.

April 1987: Hagler-Leonard Souvenir Issue. Plus: Czyz, Orlando Canizales, Mugabi-Thomas, Biggs-Snipes, Chavez-LaPorte, Bonecrusher-Witherspoon II, Haugen-Paul.

May 1987: Mike Tyson: Fighter Of The Year. Plus: Year-end awards, THE RING annual ratings, Louie Espinoza, Herol Graham.

June 1987: Vinny Paz: Phenom Or Phony? Plus: Tyson-Bonecrusher, Mark Breland, Brian Mitchell, Evander Holyfield, Czyz-Edwards, Olajide-Lee, Curry-Montgomery.

July 1987: Spinks-Cooney: The Fight That Refused To Die. Plus: The new RING ratings, Terry Marsh, George Foreman's return, Khaosai Galaxy, Hearns-Andries, Whitaker-Mayweather.

Aug. 1987: Sugar Ray: Still In Style. Plus: Leonard-Hagler, all-time heavyweight ratings, Czyz-MacDonald, Camacho-Davis.

Sept. 1987: Michael Olajide: The Look Of The Future? Plus: Tyson-Thomas, Jeff Fenech, middleweight muddle, Tsuyoshi Hamada, Juan Roldan, Harold Knight.

Nov. 1987: Tyson Wins Heavyweight Triple Crown. Plus: McCallum-Curry, Carlos Monzon interview, triple champions, Orlin & Terry Norris, Ramirez-Alli, Fenech-Richardson, Matthew Hilton.

Dec. 1987: Spinks & Lewis: Boxing's Beastie Boys. Plus: Starling-Breland, Ramzi Hassan, Honeyghan-Hatcher, Holyfield-Ocasio.

Jan. 1988: Darrin Van Horn—Million Dollar Baby? Plus: Evander Holyfield, Hill-Stewart, Juan Coggi, great hookers, AIDS.

Feb. 1988: Gold Outshines Glitter: Tate Tops Olajide. Plus: Tyson-Biggs, Kalambay-Barkley, Hearns-Roldan, fights we'd like to see.

March 1988: Thomas "Hit Man" Hearns: "Now I Own History." Plus: Lockridge & Mayweather, Tony Burton, Julio Cesar Chavez, blood.

April 1988: Evander Holyfield: Fighter Of The Year. Plus: Special year-end awards, Holyfield-Qawi II, Foreman-Sekorski, Hill-Angulo.

May 1988: George Foreman: "I Can Beat Tyson." Plus: Tyson-Holmes, Jesse Benavides, Showtime, no-knockout artists.

Sept. 1988: Sugar Ray: Here He Comes Again! Plus: Andries-Czyz, Kid Chocolate, Don Dunphy, Don Lalonde.

Oct. 1988: Mike Tyson: What Price Glory? Plus: Tyson-Spinks, Hearns-Barkley, Davey Moore.

Nov. 1988: Donny Lalonde: "Sugar Ray is Out Of His Mind!" Plus: Hall of Fame selections (Carlos Ortiz, Joe Brown, Billy Graham, Cus D'Amato, Jimmy Jacobs), Nunn-Tate, Molinares-Starling, Honeyghan-Chung, '88 Olympians.

Jan. 1989: Meldrick Taylor: Philly Phenom. Plus: Marvin Hagler, Alex Wallau, Taylor-McGirt, Olympic results.

Feb. 1989: Julio Cesar Chavez. Plus: Chavez-Ramirez, all-time lightweight ratings, Louie Espinoza, Simon Brown, Roger Mayweather.

March 1989: Hearns Next For Sugar Ray? Plus: Leonard-Lalonde, Prince Charles Williams, Hearns-Kinchen, Nunn-Roldan, Hines-Hilton.

May 1989: The Best Of '88. Plus: Year-end awards, Evander Holyfield, Pryor-Morales, Fenech-Navarro.

Jan. 1990: Boxing's Bible Reborn At Age 68. Plus: Carlos Monzon, Mike Tyson, Leonard-Duran, Daniel Zaragoza, Nunn-Barkley, Whitaker-Ramirez, George Foreman (color).

Feb. 1990: Mike Tyson: Riddick Bowe & Ray Mercer Take Aim. Plus: Bobby Czyz, Gerry Cooney, Chuck Wepner, Antonio Esparragoza, Roman-Laciar.

March 1990: The '80s—Great Fights, Great Fighters (color). Plus: Jeff Harding, Evander Holyfield, Pete Rademacher, Sharkey-McCoy.

April 1990: Pernell Whitaker: Fighter Of The Year (color). Plus: Tiger Flowers, Duran-Leonard, Chavez-Taylor preview, Jorge Paez, Ali-Cooper.

May 1990: Big George Talks Tough: "Tyson Won't Be That Difficult!" Plus: Ed Hopson, Russian fighters, grudge wars, Archie Moore, Kid Berg, Marcel Cerdan, Chavez-Cortes.

June 1990: Buster! How James Douglas Shocked The World. Plus: Michael Moorer, Camacho-Paez, Tommy Farr, excuses, Dick Tiger, Ruben Olivares-Jeff Chandler.

July 1990: "I'm Hungrier Than Ever Before," By Evander Holyfield. Plus: James Toney, Buddy McGirt, Glenwood Brown, Aaron Davis, Michael Carbajal, Jorge Paez, Kid Gavilan, Mark Breland, Ali-Liston II (color).

Aug. 1990: Chavez: His Greatness Confirmed ... Is He The Best Mexican Fighter Ever? Plus: Matthew Saad Muhammad, John L. Sullivan & Mike Tyson, Michael Nunn, Mark Breland, Harold Johnson, Cus D'Amato, Louis-Godoy (color).

Sept. 1990: Marvin Hagler—Can He Resist The Irresistible Temptation? Plus: Thomas Hearns, Sanchez-Saddler, Paul Banke, puncher vs. chin, Beau Jack, Robinson-LaMotta (color).

Nov. 1990: Tyson vs. Foreman. Can Iron Mike Stop The Blast From The Past? Plus: Bruce Seldon, best chins, Sullivan-Kilrain (color), Azumah Nelson, LaStarza.

Dec. 1990: Exclusive Annual Report: The State Of The Game. Plus: Douglas-Holyfield preview, Julio Cesar Chavez, Joe Grim, Whitaker-Nazario, Rosi-Van Horn, Benny Leonard, Douglas-Tyson (color).

Jan. 1991: Boxing's Baddest Bad Boy: Nigel Benn Plays By His Own Rules. Plus: Roberto Duran, Kid Akeem, Jose Napoles, Jimmy Carruthers, LaMotta-Zale, Dempsey-Willard (color).

Feb. 1991: Boxing On TV—Now You'll Pay! Plus: Ismael Laguna, Tommy Morrison in *Rocky V*, Reggie Tuur, Chiquita Gonzalez, Harold Green, Joe Louis.

March 1991: Hunger! It Made Evander A Champ, But ... Plus: Dempsey-Firpo, Charles Murray, Khaosai Galaxy, Nunn-Curry, Henry Armstrong, Sonny Liston (color).

April 1991: Julio Cesar Chavez—Fighter Of The Year. Plus: Tyson-Stewart, James Leija, Wilfred Benitez, Pedro Decima, Moore-Bassey.

June 1991: Pain, Frustration, Confidence, And Hope: Meldrick Taylor's Life After Chavez. Plus: Foreman-Holyfield preview, Norris-Leonard, David Kamau, Freddie Steele, Bennie Briscoe, Leonard's career (color).

July 1991: Tyson's Title Hopes: He Ain't What He Used To Be ... But It's Not Gonna Matter. Plus: Eusebio Pedroza, Myung Woo Yuh, Willie Meehan, Hearns-Hill preview, computer junior welterweight tournament, Gomez-Fenech, controversial heavyweight finishes (color).

Aug. 1991: Foreman Gives Holyfield A Fight ... And The World A Thrill (color). Plus: Making weight, Harry Greb, Kevin Kelley, Louis-Conn I, Simon Brown-Blocker, Chavez-Duplessis, Sugar Ray Robinson.

Oct. 1991: A Hit Again—How Far Can Thomas Hearns Go? Plus: Battling Levinsky, Oba Carr, Dave McAuley, Muhammad Ali, Lou Ambers, Luther McCarty, ethnic matchups, computer light heavy tournament, Cerdan-Hagler, Rocky Marciano (color).

Dec. 1991: Evander Holyfield vs. Mike Tyson: Who Will Win And Why. Plus: Eddie Aliano, Jack Britton, Muhammad Ali, Pernell Whitaker, rating the 44 world champions, Marcel Cerdan, Henry Cooper, Ezzard Charles-Jersey Joe Walcott (color).

Jan. 1992: The State Of The Game. Plus: Jerry Quarry, Julio Cesar Chavez, Mysterious Billy Smith, Joey Gamache.

May 1992: James Toney—Fighter Of The Year. Plus: Myung Woo Yuh, Khaosai Galaxy, Rocky Graziano, Billy Soose, Roy Jones, James Warring, Duran-Chavez, Marvin Hagler (color).

July 1992: Does Larry Holmes Deserve A Title Shot? Plus: Nelson-Fenech II, Tracy Patterson, Kelley-Dorsey, fat fighters, Buchanan-Camacho, Holmes-Ali (color).

Aug. 1992: Holyfield-Holmes Prefight. Holmes: "I See Me Takin' Holyfield Outta There." Plus: Iran Barkley, Herbie Hide, George Foreman, Tex Cobb, Carnival of Champions, Harry Greb, Haugen-Mancini, Oscar De La Hoya, Gene Tunney (color).

Sept. 1992: Chavez: Unbeaten At 80-0, But What If He Had To Face These Guys? Plus: Bobby Czyz, Genaro Hernandez, Norris-Taylor, Tommy Gibbons, Sugar Ray Leonard's career, Sugar Ray Robinson (color).

Nov. 1992: Is Riddick Bowe The Next Heavyweight Champion? Plus: Morrison-Hipp, Canizales-Chandler, Chavez-Camacho preview, Australia Best of Nation, Tyson speaks from prison, Corbett-Sullivan (color), Tracy Patterson, Pat Barrett, Knockout Brown.

Feb. 1993: America's Tribute To The Brown Bomber: Joe Louis. Plus: Virgil Hill, Junior Jones, Roger Mayweather, Chicago boxing, Orlando Zulueta, Jose Napoles (color).

April 1993: Riddick Bowe—Fighter Of The Year. Plus: "Grand Slam" fight card, Toney-Barkley preview, Morris East, Joe Louis-John Henry Lewis, All-Time Top 10: Argentina, Fighters of the Year (color).

May 1993: Oscar De La Hoya's Sprint To The Title: Is He Good Enough *Now?* Plus: Carbajal-Gonzalez preview, Lennox Lewis, THE RING Poll, Freddie Pendleton.

April 1994: Michael Carbajal—Fighter Of The Year. Plus: Brown-Norris, Kevin Kelley, Ceferino Garcia, Oscar De La Hoya, Tunney Hunsaker, Spinks-Foster.

Aug. 1994: Bowe's Back! Determined To Do It Again. Plus: Eric Griffin, Pernell Whitaker, Ray Mercer, Roger Donoghue, State of the Game (midterm report), All-Time Top 10: The Philippines.

Oct. 1994: Rating The Champs: Whitaker & Toney Lead The Field ... But Roy Jones Is Closing Fast. Plus: Oscar De La Hoya, Meldrick Taylor, Rafael Ruelas, Curtis Cokes.

Dec. 1994: Fighting-Mad! James Toney Just Wants To Beat People Up. Plus: Duran & Robinson, Don King, Mike McCallum, injuries (part II), Tom Molineaux.

Jan. 1995: A Puncher's Dream: Oliver McCall Upsets Boxing's Balance Of Power. Plus: Ruelas brothers, Quincy Taylor, "Unfinished Business," Dave Maier, All-Time Top 10: Canada.

May 1995: The State Of The Game. Plus: Olzubek & Arbachakov, Gonzalez-Kelley, Pazienza-Duran II, All-Time Top 10: France.

June 1995: (92-Page Special): Foreman Frowns Upon The Age Gap: "I Don't Think Tyson Should Fight Anyone But Me." Plus: Least deserving heavyweight challengers, Carlos Monzon, Kostya Tszyu.

July 1995: Pernell Whitaker: THE RING Makes "Pound-For-Pound" An Official Title. Plus: Riddick Bowe, Ike Quartey, Benn-McClellan, TV prospects, Hector Acero-Sanchez, Harry Matthews, What If ... Robinson-Burley.

Oct. 1995 (92-Page Special): Mismatch? Don't Tell Peter McNeeley! Plus: Fights we'd like to see, Jo-el Scott, Bronco McKart, when stop fights?

Dec. 1995: Mike Tyson (vs. Peter McNeeley): The Beast Is Yet To Come. Plus: Morrison-Lewis preview, Naseem Hamed, Chiquita Gonzalez, Gaspar Ortega, 10 best chins.

Jan. 1996: King Bruno! A Hero Always ... A Winner At Last. Plus: Julio Cesar Chavez, Oscar De La Hoya, Chris Eubank, Eddie Perkins, who's hot/who's not.

Feb. 1996: Bowe's The Man (For Now), But Is He Man Enough For Tyson? Plus: Lennox Lewis, Hamed-Barrera, Paul Banke, Vince Phillips, boxing on Madison Ave., What If ... Leonard-Pryor.

Sept. 1996: Lennox Lewis: Tough Enough For Tyson? Plus: Lewis-Mercer, Olympic team, Pernell Whitaker, Mark Johnson, Rocky, Scrapiron Johnson, heavyweight hopefuls.

Nov. 1996: Pole-Axed! Low Blows, Sinking Bowe, Ugly Show. Plus: Bowe-Golota I, Blinky Palermo, exciting fighters, Winky Wright, Joe Brown.

Dec. 1996: Our Spin On Roy Jones. Plus: heavyweight division, Olympic recap, Luis Rodriguez, Puerto Rican fighters, Danny Hodge, Saad Muhammad.

May 1997: De La Hoya-Whitaker: Can "Sweet Pea" Stop Oscar's March To Greatness? Plus: Fitzsimmons-Corbett, Junior Jones, Phillip Holiday, Don King, Zaragoza-McCullough.

June 1997 (Special Collector's Issue): Holyfield-Tyson II: What It Means For Now ... And Forever. Plus: Holyfield-Tyson fight poster, Naseem Hamed, computer unification, Sayers-Heenan, state of the game.

July 1997: Leonard: There Wasn't Even A Ray Of Hope. Plus: Felix Trinidad, David Reid, Willie deWit & Shawn O'Sullivan, THE RING's 75th anniversary, Moore-Durelle I.

Oct. 1997: Bang! Naseem Hamed Takes Aim At America. Plus: Riddick Bowe, Phillips-Tszyu, Saman Sorjaturong, Bobby Dykes.

Nov. 1997: Is Mike Tyson Finished? Plus: Ike Ibeabuchi, De La Hoya-Camacho preview, Frankie Conley, Hall of Fame, gloves,

Holiday 1997: Roy Jones: When He's Motivated, He's Unstoppable—Got That, Evander? Plus: Julio Cesar Green, Sugar Shane Mosley, boxers' day jobs, Tyson's mentor, Kid Lavigne.

Jan. 1998: Give This Man His Due! If You Can't Respect Oscar ... You Can't Respect Anyone! Plus: Sanchez-Mayweather, Morales-Zaragoza, Lucia Rijker, Marvin Johnson, characters.

Feb. 1998: Welter-Skelter! The Hottest Division In Boxing. Plus: Lewis-Golota, Olympic update, Art Shires, boxing I.Q.

March 1998 (92-Page Special): Into The Millennium With The Real Deal: THE RING's Timeline For Evander Holyfield. Plus: Hernandez-Hernandez, Briggs-Foreman, 10 champs recall "The Day I Won The Title," Johnny Thompson.

April 1998: Evander Holyfield: THE RING's Fighter Of The Year (Again!). Plus: Yory Boy Campas, Mullings-Norris, Pinkey Mitchell, Holyfield Q & A, Hamed-Kelley, Oscar De La Hoya.

June 1998 (92-Page Special): The State Of The Game. Plus: Tyson-King, David Reid, Bernard Hopkins, Ken Norton.

July 1998: Holyfield ... Tapia ... Hamed ... Jones ... Trinidad ... De La Hoya: Who Will Be The First To Fall? Plus: Magic Johnson, Chavez-Gonzalez & Lopez-Alvarez, underappreciated boxers.

Aug. 1998: Lennox Lewis: No Holyfield, No Glory. Plus: Felix Trinidad, Pat & Mike McMurtry, Chris Byrd, unbreakable records, contenders & pretenders.

Sept. 1998 (92-Page Special): This Man's Not Unbeatable! Five Top Trainers Reveal How To Solve The Hamed Puzzle. Plus: John Tate, Freddie Norwood, Andrew Golota, Roy Jones, 12 greatest finishes.

Oct. 1998: Really Hard Punch ... Really Soft Lips: Oscar Makes Legs Quiver In And Out Of The Ring. Plus: Hector Camacho Jr., Mayweather-Hernandez preview, *Tuesday Night Fights.*

Jan. 1999: Sugar Shane Mosley: The Sweet Tradition Continues. Plus: Evander Holyfield, Julio Cesar Chavez, Erik Morales, Ray "Windmill" White.

Feb. 1999: 1999! It's Gonna Be A Great Year For Boxing. Plus: Mike Tyson, Foreman-Holmes, David Reid, Eric Morel, Richie Mitchell, quitters.

March 1999: De La Hoya vs. Quartey: Does Bazooka Have The Weapons To Shoot Down Oscar? Plus: Sugar Shane Mosley, Lopez-Alvarez II, Roy Jones, Coley Wallace.

April 1999 (92-Page Special): Fighter Of The Year: Floyd Mayweather Jr.: "He's So Good, It's Scary!" Plus: Fernando Vargas, James Page, Luisito Espinosa, Robinson-Gatti II, Archie Moore, Carlos Oritz, 1998 diary.

May 1999: Is It All Over For Tyson? Plus: Terry Norris, Vinny Pazienza, Jesus Pimental, stoppages, mandatories.

June 1999: The Fans Have Spoken: Results Of THE RING Readers' Poll. Plus: Michael Grant, De La Hoya-Quartey, Antwun Echols, Ted Lowry.

July 1999 (92-Page Special): The State Of The Game. Plus: Holyfield-Lewis, Felix Trinidad, Stevie Johnston, Emile Griffith, Phil Zwick.

Aug. 1999: Candidates For Greatness: Can Anyone Fill The Heavyweight Void? Plus: Tim Austin, Naseem Hamed, Oscar De La Hoya, Max Schmeling, Holyfield-Lewis.

Sept. 1999: Taking Stock In The Fight Game: Who's Hot, Who's Not. Plus: Tony Ayala, Keith Holmes, Denny & Phil Moyer, scoring.

Oct. 1999 (92-Page Special): Felix & Oscar Go To War! Who's Going To Prevail In The Welter Shootout? Plus: Floyd Mayweather, Harry Simon, Omar Sheika, Al Andrews, 20 greatest fighters of 20th century.

Dec. 1999: Insiders' Analysis: Can Roy Jones Chop Down The Best Heavyweights? Plus: Ike Ibeabuchi, David Reid, David Tua, Carmen Basilio, Johnny Summerlin.

Holiday 1999 (92-Page Special): Heavyweight Showdowns! Holyfield vs. Lewis II, Grant vs. Golota. Plus: Francois Botha, Arturo Gatti, Michael Carbajal, Rocky Marciano, Lou Filippo.

Jan. 2000: What Does Trinidad's Victory Over Oscar Mean? Plus: Floyd Mayweather, Paul Spadafora, Ralph Dupas, boxing media.

March 2000: Lennox Lewis: The Champ For The Millennium ... Or Just For The Moment? Plus: Oleg Maskaev, Main Events, Derrick Jefferson, Jerry Buss, IBF scandal.

April 2000 (92-Page Special): Paulie Ayala—Fighter Of The Year. Plus: Evander Holyfield, Grant-Golota, Stephan Johnson, Gaspar Ortega, Kitten Hayward, writers' favorite fights.

May 2000: Lennox Lewis Will Quit ... Or Get Knocked Out, By Michael Grant. Plus: Roy Jones, Quartey-Vargas preview, Garth Panter, best chins, boxing movies.

June 2000: The Honors Keep Coming! Lenox Lewis Receives The Undisputed RING Belt. Plus: Roy Jones, Vernon Forrest, Teddy Atlas, Mike Tyson, Don Fullmer.

July 2000 (92-Page Special): The State Of The Game. Plus: Felix Trinidad, Zab Judah, Oscar De La Hoya, Barrera-Morales, Ken Buchanan, Beau Jack, Eric Bottjer.

Aug. 2000: Hamed! And The Men Who Want To Kick His Naz! Plus: David Reid, James Prince, Anthony Fletcher, Micky Ward, final beatings, white hopes.

Sept. 2000: A New Look At Lennox Lewis: Is He An All-Time Great? Plus: Winky Wright, Michael Moorer, De La Hoya & Vargas, Eddie McGoorty.

Oct. 2000 (92-Page Special): Move Up Or Shut Up! We're Sick Of Roy Jones' Heavyweight Tease. Plus: Lennox Lewis, Tapia & Romero, Hasim Rahman, Dwight Qawi, Al Palzer, fight films, best refs.

(ALL-COLOR BEGINNING WITH THE DECEMBER 2000 ISSUE)

Dec. 2000: The Hell With Tyson—Tua Is The Man Who Could Beat Lewis. Plus: Mike Tyson, Felix Trinidad, Wladimir Klitschko, Trilla in Manila, U.S. vs. World, Toxey Hall.

Jan. 2001 (108-Page Extra): Trinidad's Destiny: Jones Is On His Mind ... But Vargas Is In His Face! Plus: Naseem Hamed, Tszyu-Judah, Evander Holyfield, Willie Bean, 20 greatest middleweights.

Feb. 2001: It's Not Over For Oscar: THE RING's Five-Step Recovery Plan. Plus: Bob Arum, Dingaan Thobela, Hernandez brothers, U.S. Olympic team, future pound-for-pounders.

March 2001 (108-Page Extra): Tyson! Forget About Retirement ... A Title Shot Awaits! Plus: Ayala-Tapia II, Audley Harrison, Chris Byrd, Kirk Johnson, Julio Cesar Chavez, Boone Kirkman, 12 most exciting rounds.

April 2001: A New Beginning ... A New Middle: Felix Trinidad Is Ready To Conquer Another Division! Plus: Shane Mosley, Lennox Lewis, Paul Andrews, boxing business.

May 2001 (108-Page Extra): Felix Trinidad—Fighter Of The Year. Plus: Year-end awards, Barrera-Hamed preview, Bernard Hopkins, Joey Archer.

June 2001: Pretty Boy Floyd: Superstar Or Superbrat? Plus: Lewis vs. greats, 2000 Olympians, Henry Hall, rematches we'd like to see.

July 2001 (108-Page Extra): The State Of The Game. Plus: Zab Judah, John Ruiz, Andrew Lewis, Mark Johnson, British boxing.

Aug. 2001: Rocking The World! What Rahman's Victory Means To Boxing. Plus: Barrera-Hamed, Oscar De La Hoya, Mount Whitaker, *Friday Night Fights.*

Sept. 2001 (108-Page Extra): Exclusive RING Interview—Hasim Rahman: "Nobody's Taking My Titles!" Plus: 20 all-time greatest lightweights, Pat Valentino, Hopkins & King, Jones & Arum.

Oct. 2001: Trinidad vs. Hopkins: Middleweight Unification Superfight Analysis & Predictions. Plus: Emanuel Steward, Joe Calzaghe, Ali's opponents, Rahman & King.

Dec. 2001: The Rock Promises Another Shock! "I'm Gonna Knock Lennox Out Again!" Plus: David Reid, Jones-Gonzalez, McCline-Grant, Jackie Graves, ring deaths.

Jan. 2002 (108-Page Extra): Oscar Feeds His Critics: Did He Chicken Out Against Vargas? Plus: Wladimir Klitschko, Chris Byrd, 20 greatest featherweights, "Caveman" Bob Moha.

March 2002 (108-Page Extra): Is Tyson Ready To Regain The Title? Plus: Kostya Tszyu, Floyd Mayweather, Bernard Hopkins, Eddie Futch, fitness, ahead for 2002.

May 2002 (108-Page Extra): Bernard Hopkins—Fighter Of The Year. Plus: Year-end awards, Holyfield-Ruiz III, 2000 Olympians, Eric Harding, "Silent" Hairston.

June 2002: Lennox Lewis: I'll End The Tyson "Freak Show!" Plus: Forrest-Mosley, Freitas-Casamayor, De La Hoya & Vargas, Hagler & Leonard.

July 2002 (108-Page Extra): Exclusive Preview: The Oscar-Fernando Hatefest. Plus: Hopkins & Monzon, Francisco Bojado, Buddy McGirt, Lionel Rose, State of the Game.

Aug. 2002: Lewis vs. Tyson: Who Will Win ... And What Happens Next. Plus: Michael Moorer, Jeff Fenech, Charley Parham, Rafael & Juan Manuel Marquez.

Sept. 2002 (108-Page Extra): Vernon Forrest—Next Step In The Master Plan: End Mosley's Career. Plus: Sugar Ray Leonard, Roberto Duran, Ricardo Mayorga, 20 greatest lightweights.

Oct. 2002: Tito' Back ... And He's "Going To Make Hopkins Pay!" Plus: Ward-Gatti, Bouie Fisher, controversial scoring, ruining prospects.

Nov. 2002 (108-Page Extra): Monster Mashed! Can A New Tyson Emerge From The Rubble? Plus: THE RING 100, Evander Holyfield, Don King, Billy Joiner, junior welters.

Dec. 2002: Ward & Gatti Look To Hit Another Grand Slam! Plus: Forrest-Mosley II, Barrera-Morales II, Manny Pacquiao, Tim Austin, Nino Benvenuti, Mark Taffet.

Jan. 2003 (108-Page Extra): The Golden Boy Proves His Manhood: Is Oscar De La Hoya' Prime Just Beginning? Plus: Michael Grant, David Tua, previews of Morales-Ayala and Ward-Gatti II, overrated/underrated.

Feb. 2003: The Resurrection Of A Warrior: Cam Evander Holyfield Recapture The Glory Of His Youth? Also: Floyd Mayweather Sr., Nate Campbell, Tom & Peter McNeeley, boxing finances, pound-for-pound.

March 2003 (108-Page Extra): Hamed ... Morales ... Tapia: Barrera Has Punched His Ticket To The Hall Of Fame. Also: Joe Mesi, Ricardo Lopez, Pipino Cuevas, alphabet tales, what's ahead for '03.

April 2003: Gatti Has His Ducks In A Row: A New Woman And A New Trainer Put The "Art" Back In Arturo. Also: Barrera-Morales, Roy Jones, Phillip Ndou & Silence Mabuza, Laila Ali, Gorilla Jones,

May 2003 (108-Page Extra): Ali ... Leonard ... Tyson ... Klitschko? Also: Year-end awards, Chris Byrd, Lupe Pintor, Maxie Rosenbloom.

June 2003: Exclusive! The Ring Grills George Foreman. Also: Kostya Tszyu, Ricardo Mayorga, Diego Corrales, Tommy Loughran.

July 2003 (108-Page Extra): Now What, Roy? How Jones Matches Up Against The Heavyweight Elite. Also: Mike Tyson, Marquez Brothers, Ricardo Williams, Tony Zale.

☐ Mar/82	☐ Aug/85	☐ Jan/88	☐ Nov/90	☐ Apr/94	☐ Nov/97	☐ Hol/99	☐ Dec/01
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BRAVEST OF THE BRAVE

THE 10 BIGGEST HEARTS IN BOXING

By Brian Doogan

When you get to the heart of the matter, every fighter needs heart, even the six-round journeymen who take almost as many verbals as volleys. "Stay down, you bum, you'll catch less that way," some smart ass will cry from a safe distance in the hall. He knows nothing of what a fighter has put himself through just to be in the ring.

The men who elevate themselves inside sport's ultimate truth chamber are varied of skill, speed, style, and celebrity. But one quality unites them all: They are warriors, with a heart that could break a hammer. Some of them will never rise to the pinnacle. A lack of skill, a lack of stamina perhaps, will prevent them from reaching the top. But their courage is to be marveled over nonetheless. Boxing's bravest—the top-10 most courageous fighters as selected by THE RING and listed on the following pages in alphabetical order—may not be the best in their division. But the best in their division will have to be big men to beat them.

Marcus Aurelius, the second-century Roman emperor and philosopher, wrote that when using one's principles, a person ought to emulate the boxer, not the gladiator—"For the gladiator must pick up and lay down his sword, but the boxer always has his hands and only needs to clench them." The boxers recognized here are extreme examples of pugilism's most basic principle: Men who clench their hands for a living need the heart, too, to use them.

PAULIE AYALA

Do not be fooled by the warm smile: Texans come no tougher than the little man from Fort Worth. Cut by an accidental butt in the sixth round of his challenge of then-WBC bantamweight titleholder Joichiro Tatsuyoshi in 1998 in Yokohama, Japan, and handed a technical loss, Ayala regrouped to decision Johnny Tapia in a thrilling battle that was THE RING's Fight of the Year in 1999 (a year that ended with Ayala also taking Fighter of the Year honors). Never a concussive puncher (his last eight fights have all gone the full 12 rounds), Ayala has relied on heart and a blue-collar work ethic throughout his career.

Despite beating Tapia again as well as the likes of Saohin Sithchai Condo and Johnny Bredahl, recognition eluded Ayala until he outpointed Bones Adams in convincing fashion in a rematch in 2002. But a jump to featherweight to face the murderous Mexican puncher Erik Morales was always likely to be one obstacle too many. Morales rocked Ayala with uppercuts and hammered him from range. Just to survive, Ayala had to be brave. He was. He finished the fight on his feet, but had lumps the size of marbles on his forehead, his left eye was swollen shut, and his jaw jutted out like a melon. "I just made a million bucks. How many other people out there tonight could say that?" asked Ayala. He earned every cent.

CHARLES BREWER

Burying "The Hatchet" has been beyond most of the men with whom the proud Philadelphian has shared the ring. Scott Pemberton thought he might be the one, but Brewer came through a wild brawl last August. For two rounds, Brewer seemed nearly out of it and could barely stay on his feet, but he dug deep and rallied to stop Pemberton in the sixth. The fight was typical of what Brewer has become: a capable boxer who chooses to be a pure warrior, a man who lets the Philly in him show every time out.

He was made to put forth the same sort of effort against the harder hitting and more talented Joe Calzaghe, who landed over and over during a pulsating 12 rounds in Cardiff, Wales, in 2002. Had Brewer's will been lacking, he would never have gone the distance that night. He was prevented from going the distance against Antwun Echols in their three-round war in 2001, but was on his feet—having knocked Echols down three times in the second round—when referee Michael Ortega controversially intervened. Brewer proved his mettle, too, when he rallied to stop Britain's Herol Graham in '98, having suffered a flash knockdown and a bad ankle injury early in the bout.

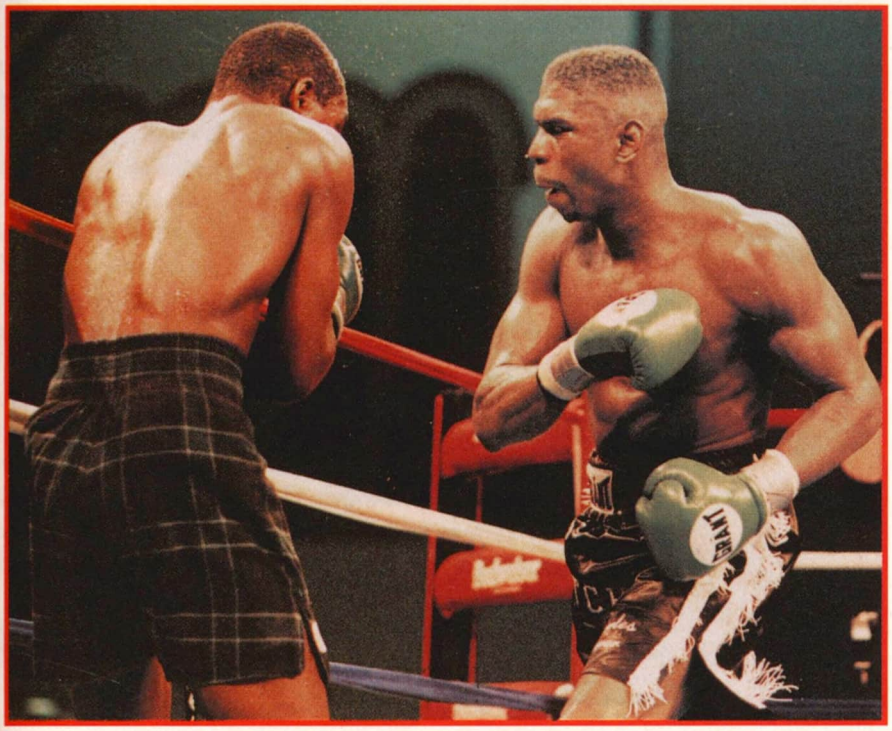
LEONARD DORIN

Behind on points, blood dripping from both of his badly swollen eyes, Dorin looked done after eight rounds in his sensational January 2002 tilt with Raul Balbi for the WBA lightweight title in San Antonio. But instead of staying on his stool, he rose to meet the bell for the ninth round, to meet the challenge, to authenticate his nickname, "Leo The Lion." Overhand rights and left hooks that jolted back Balbi's head changed the course of the fight, Dorin sweeping the late stages of the grueling encounter to overcome his early deficit. At the final bell, Dorin's face was a bloody mess, but the split decision went his way.

PHOTOS BY WILL HART/HBO

Junior featherweight champ Paulie Ayala went all out in his title bid against WBC featherweight beltholder Erik Morales, but although he absorbed too many punches to claim victory, the tough little Texan lasted the distance despite a swollen eye (inset) and made Morales fight hard every step of the way.

The Montreal-based Romanian is not a big puncher, relying on his conditioning, doggedness, and capacity to take a punch to take him through tough engagements like his showdown against Paul Spadafora, who many believed would end his reign. But the two-time Olympic bronze medalist toughed it out against the pride of Pittsburgh, again battling through nasty gashes and earning a draw that most felt should have been a victory. Spadafora is not known for being in entertaining fights, but Dorin is proving himself the sort who could never have a dull encounter.



Former IBF super middleweight titleholder Charles Brewer survived an ankle injury to stop Herol Graham in a March 1998 title defense (pictured). Even though he's now past his prime, Brewer is still providing fans with great action virtually every time out.

ARTURO GATTI

See Micky Ward. Gatti is now as inextricably linked with his adversary from Lowell, Massachusetts, as Ali and Frazier, Zale and Graziano, Robinson and LaMotta. Their first encounter was one for the ages. For the first four rounds, Gatti boxed and Ward struggled to penetrate. But then his left hook to the body slowed Gatti down, the New Jersey-based Canadian was made to fight, and they traded relentlessly for the remainder of the bout. Gatti showed his heart most after being hit in the liver. It was round nine, mere seconds into the round, and the pained expression on his face as he took the mandatory count from Frank Cappuccino was distressing even to look at. But he survived Ward's onslaught, rallied and had Ward hurt, and then took a battering at the end of the round that almost persuaded his trainer, Buddy McGirt, to pull him out. Instead, Gatti somehow dominated the 10th and final round, and though it was not enough to secure the decision, it was a monumental effort.

The rematch was easier passage, Ward never recovering from a right hand that decked him in round three. But rare is the easy Gatti fight. Most require him to battle

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Micky Ward and Arturo Gatti slug it out in their epic first encounter, which Ward won via narrow decision. Both warriors have displayed amazing courage again and again throughout their careers.

back in the face of certain defeat, sometimes with success (against Wilson Rodriguez and Gabriel Ruelas) and sometimes without (against Angel Manfredy and Ivan Robinson), but always with unsurpassed determination and desire.

EVANDER HOLYFIELD

Through 15 years as a heavyweight, Holyfield has embodied the warrior spirit. A 15-round war against Dwight Muhammad Qawi had cemented his claims to cruiserweight supremacy before the Atlanta brave stepped up to the glamour division. Genetically challenged in his new battle against the biggest men, Holyfield refused to accept that he might not be equipped for the long fight for acceptance as a genuine heavyweight. But he proved that he deserved such acceptance and more in his stirring trilogy with Riddick Bowe, the 10th round of their first fight establishing for eternity that Holyfield had a special facility to be unyielding when, battered from pillar to post, he rallied before the round had ended to leave big Bowe hanging on. He lost a decision and the world heavyweight championship he had won from Buster Douglas, but he had gained a reputation he would never lose.

Ironically, his heart almost gave out in his first bout with Michael Moorer, when he suffered something close to a heart attack, but went on to twice beat Mike Tyson—the first time when he demonstrated once more his utter refusal to submit, the second time when Tyson's spirit sagged and he resorted to biting Holyfield's ears. A draw and a defeat by decision against Lennox Lewis in 1999 have failed to kill his quest to retire as undisputed champion, but his heart may be all he has left if his three fights with John Ruiz and last December's defeat against Chris Byrd are accurate indicators.

WAYNE McCULLOUGH

"The Pocket Rocket" has traded with heart as much as leather for his entire career, breaking the morale and resistance of opponents with his sheer volume of punches and will to succeed. In 319 contests as an amateur (the highlight of which was Olympic silver in Barcelona, when he fought Cuba's Joel Casamayor with a cheekbone that was shattered in his semifinal bout, putting at risk his future career) and 30 as a professional, McCullough has never once been floored. Against Mexican veteran Victor Rabanales and Japan's Yaseui Yakushiji, McCullough established

Courage has been one of the hallmarks of Evander Holyfield's remarkable career, and never did that courage shine brighter than in the breathtaking 10th round of his first bout with Riddick Bowe in which "The Real Deal" survived a terrific beating to storm back and hurt Bowe.

PHOTO BY FRANK VITUCCI

A small bruise over his left eye is the only sign that Wayne McCullough has just gone 12 rounds with Naseem Hamed. Few others possess the heart—and chin—of the brave Irishman.

himself as the best bantamweight in the world. But after two defenses of the WBC title, he could not longer make the weight and moved up to challenge Daniel Zaragoza in 1997, battling through a broken jaw to lose by split decision in an excellent fight.

It was against the devastating punching combination of Naseem Hamed and Erik Morales that McCullough solidified his reputation as an iron man of the ring, taking the best punches of both men to earn recognition from THE RING as having the best chin in boxing. Told by the British Boxing Board in 2000 that one more punch could kill him after a cyst was discovered in his skull, McCullough fought for the right to fight, a perfect illustration of just how much heart and desire he has. He was eventually granted a license, but had to rely on his chin and courage more than he would have hoped to last the distance against the much bigger Scott Harrison in March 2003.

ERIK MORALES

Some might say that it takes more courage for the other guy to get in the ring with this man, but the 26-year-old from Tijuana has done plenty to demonstrate his own worth in the trenches. Destructive power in both hands, particularly his right, saw him overcome Daniel Zaragoza to win the WBC super bantamweight belt and eight subsequent challenges before Wayne McCullough was lined up to be victim number nine. But the gritty Irishman gave the Mexican's heart its first stern test, withstanding everything that Morales threw at him and firing back enough himself to leave an exhausted Morales contemplating if he should quit. He came through the crisis to take a unanimous decision, the toll it took on him clearly evident in his heavily marked face.

In his next bout, Morales' heart was laid bare for everyone to see. Marco Antonio Barrera and Morales waged one of the great little wars of the ring. Both were hurt badly in a fiercely fluctuating fight, Morales answering each call to arms to claim a controversial split decision victory. But the rematch saw a more cautious effort by Barrera, which magnified the determination of Morales' effort, even though "El Terrible" this time lost a debatable decision. What is beyond debate is that Morales is the fiercest of warriors, a standard-bearer for his warrior race.

FERNANDO VARGAS

Though beaten in the two biggest bouts of his career, it is the way Vargas fights that has established him firmly as a paragon of Latin machismo. Felix Trinidad had him down twice and seemingly on the way out in the opening round of their December 2000 meeting of mitts. But Vargas was resolved to not going out in this meek way. He battled through the storm and found his footing, scoring a knockdown of his own and extending Trinidad into the final round before he fell with nothing left.

The animosity he felt toward Oscar De La Hoya made his second defeat more painful, but again he fought to the last. Floyd Mayweather Sr., De La Hoya's trainer, had described Vargas' chin as "made of glass." But he absorbed enough blows from "The Golden Boy" to prove otherwise. At several points he even looked like he might have the better of his rival, but his conditioning let him down.

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Both winner Oscar De La Hoya and loser Fernando Vargas displayed huge hearts during their give-and-take battle in September 2002. Despite losing the two biggest bouts of his career, Vargas has remained a fan-favorite, in large part because of his unflagging bravery.

De La Hoya dropped him with a fierce left hook in the 11th round, and it was as good as over at that point. But Vargas was standing, bloodied but unbowed, when the referee intervened. Though his image was tarnished by the revelation that he had steroids in his system, Vargas' in-ring effort still lived up to his nicknames "El Feroz" and "The Aztec Warrior."

MICKY WARD

There has only ever been one way for Ward, and that is straight ahead. Time and again he has demonstrated this, in come-from-behind knockout wins against Alfonso Sanchez, Reggie Green, and Shea Neary, in back-and-forth 10-round battles with Antonio Diaz and Emanuel Burton, and, most memorably, in his wars with Arturo Gatti. Though he won their first fight, it was the rematch that showed the depth of the 37-year-old's courage. Nailed behind the left ear by a powerful right hand, Ward fell against a ringpost, his eardrum busted and his equilibrium completely gone. There was too much time left in the round for any ordinary man to survive. He could not stand and keep his legs beneath him. Yet he found a way to stay in there. Gatti rocked him repeatedly, Ward had to take to the ropes for support, and then the bell came to his rescue.

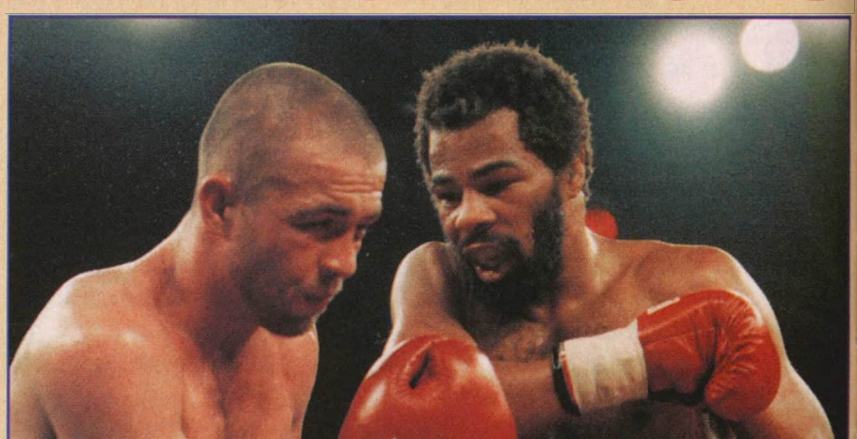
But he was not the same for the rest of the fight. At several points in the subsequent rounds, it was grim battle for survival for Ward. Defeat was inevitable, but to lie down would be heresy to this man. "Everyone goes down," he said in a recent interview with *KO*. "It's the people who get up and fight on, that's what counts."

A HEARTBEAT AWAY FROM THE TOP 10

Marco Antonio Barrera: Nobody would dispute this man's right to be known as a warrior. The conqueror of Naseem Hamed assumed the role of avenger in his rematch with Erik Morales. But he also showed a more safety-conscious approach that has transformed the one-time "Baby-Faced Assassin" into a boxer less inclined to be drawn into the little wars that made his name, thus keeping him out of the top 10 in this listing.

Emanuel Burton: You only need look at his war against Micky Ward, in the Fight of the Year in 2001, for verification of Burton's right to be here. The rugged journeyman also gave Floyd Mayweather one of his most demanding fights.

Oscar De La Hoya: Behind the handsome face of "The Golden Boy" lurks the fiercest of competitors. He demonstrated



Burton rocks Mike Griffith en route to kayo win

DaVARRYL WILLIAMSON

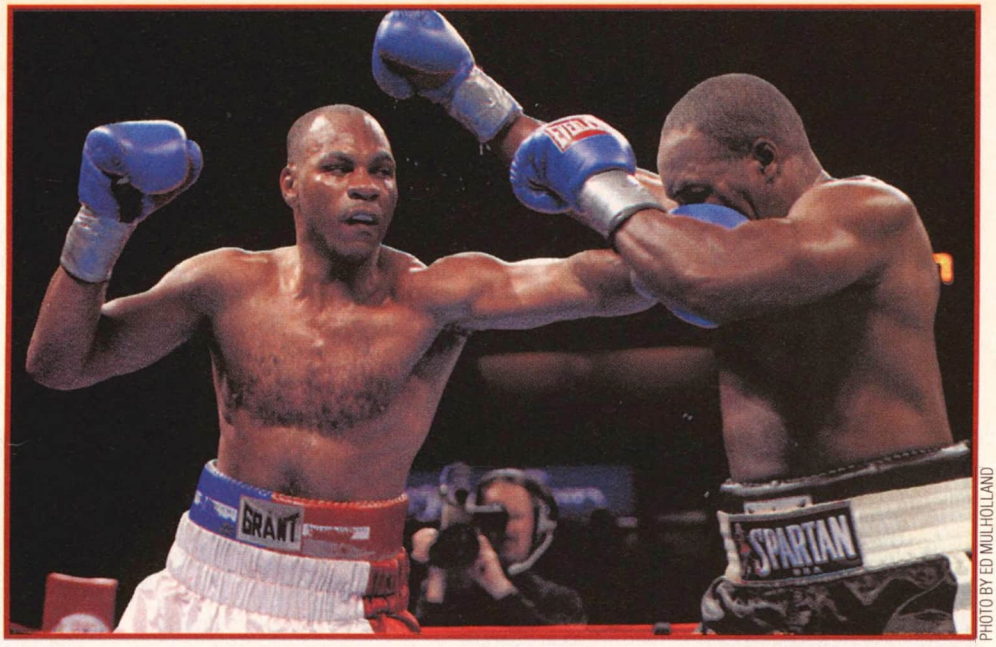


PHOTO BY ED MULHOLLAND

Against tough Robert Wiggins, heavyweight DaVarryl Williamson showed his determination by winning despite a broken jaw. But it was in Williamson's previous fight, against Corey Sanders, that his courage was most visible, as he won in spite of giving away 102 pounds.

It was the third round of a bout that could catapult him into serious contention, but suddenly it looked like Williamson was about to have his hopes squashed. Giving away a staggering 102 pounds to the 6'6", 313-pound Corey "T-Rex" Sanders, Williamson was caught by a left hook that sent him hurtling into the ropes and drew a standing eight-count from the referee. Sanders was carrying a personal best seven-fight unbeaten streak into the ring, and he was confident now that he would make it eight. But Williamson showed his resilience. He turned the tide in the fourth and took advantage of Sanders' diminishing stamina in the fifth, forcing a standing eight-count before a right, left, and another right sent Sanders to the canvas for the full count.

Dubbed "Touch Of Sleep" because of his capacity to bid goodnight to opponents, Williamson was made to win the hard way against southpaw Robert Wiggins in January. Not only did Wiggins take him the distance, Williamson had also to overcome the pain of a broken jaw. Twice he put Wiggins on the floor, a sharp left-right yielding a knockdown in round three and a series of right uppercuts doing the damage in the eighth, but Wiggins was dogged, and Williamson had to show real resolve to come through to win by decision. It's the same resolve that a smallish heavyweight who got a late start in the game must show every time out against the giants of today's heavyweight division. ■

Brian Doogan is THE RING'S European correspondent.

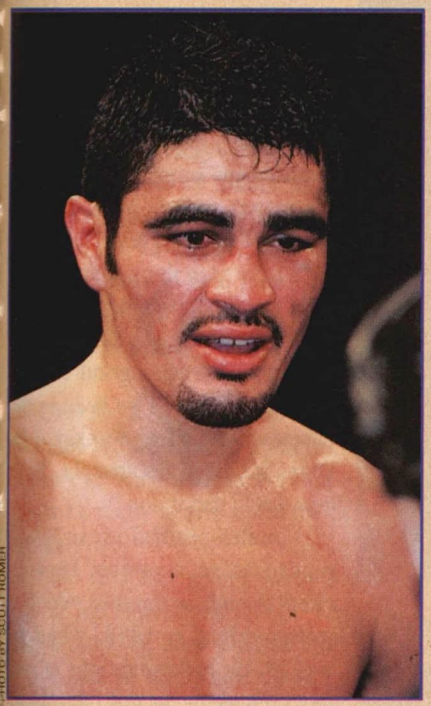


PHOTO BY JOSEPH ROMEO

Gonzalez knows how to come off the deck

the will that complements his skill against Fernando Vargas in September last year, weathering the storm that Vargas whipped up in the opening round and regenerated at regular intervals before establishing his superiority emphatically with a clinical 11th-round climax. Has faced all the men there is to face and will seek revenge against Shane Mosley in September.

Julio Gonzalez: Knocked down three times in a give-and-take battle with Julian Letterlough, Gonzalez scored two knockdowns himself and gutted out a win. He was floored three times also by Roy Jones, but lasted the distance.

Vassiliy Jirov: The punches he withstood before finally falling at the feet of James Toney in the final round of their cruiserweight war—he got up to last the distance—proved that Jirov has a heart eclipsed by few fighters.

Manuel Medina: Naseem Hamed had to dig deep to beat the Mexican, who had wars with Tom Johnson, Paul Ingle, and Johnny Tapia as well. More recently, Medina took sledgehammer blows from Juan Manuel Marquez and kept coming until the referee stopped the contest.

Vince Phillips: The only fighter to beat world junior welterweight champion Kostya Tszyu, whom he stopped in the 10th round in 1997, Phillips took a frightful beating against British hope Ricky Hatton in April, but managed to stay the course.

Johnny Tapia: Coming back from the dead outside the ring, resurrecting his career inside the ring—nobody does it quite like Tapia. The 35-year-old used all his guile and guts to go the distance with Marco Antonio Barrera, having proved his courage long ago in wars with Danny Romero and Paulie Ayala.

—BD

New Face

(Continued from page 20)

get hit, though it might seem that way. But believe me, I've been hit pretty hard, but I've never been down. I do recognize that it's something that I'm going to have to change."

Gary Sullenger, Morales' trainer, says the young fighter is often too macho for his own good.

"It's like when you're in there with Art, he just flicks a switch, and he gets that much more aggressive," said Sullenger, who's been training Morales at the Concord Youth Center, in Concord, California, since 2001. "He comes forward, and I've never seen him back down from anyone since I've been working with him. He's very coherent about what I want him to do, and he's very attuned to adjustments. He's perceptive and aware of what's going on around him. There's a method to Art's madness.

"But what Art has is nothing I've taught him. I suppose the best way to put it is that Art has tremendous balls and a great chin. He's not afraid of anything or anyone. That's obviously a little bit of a problem, too, so we're concentrating a great deal on his defense. His only fault is that he's more macho than anything else. He concentrates more on hitting an opponent than making an opponent miss him."

Morales' undefeated streak hasn't been built on total pushovers. He's been in with opponents who have made him fight. Morales has twice defeated Alejandro Jimenez, a tough veteran of more than 40 fights. Jimenez fought top-10 contender Omar Weis to a six-round draw in '02, but lost both of his fights with Morales.

Morales' biggest victory to date came against Arturo Reyes, a dangerous veteran who won his first 12 pro fights by knockout, on May 24 in Vallejo, California. Morales had Reyes in trouble early, knocking the Mexican down in the first round with a straight right to the body. Morales won every round on his way to an eight-round unanimous decision.

"If you look at some of the guys Art's fought, he's faced some guys who go rounds," Sullenger said. "He's had to outbox most of these guys, but these are all guys who are tough guys. Arturo wins more from attrition. He wears guys down. I think Arturo can be a world champion, but I have seen things happen that have derailed guys before. I like the fact that he's still pretty young, and he has good experience behind him. I've been in the business long enough to say if he keeps his head on straight, he'll be a world champion."

Morales chalked up an 88-13 record as an amateur. He was rated as high as number two as a welterweight in 1998, when he was 19. He had aspirations of one day competing in the Olympics, but that dream went up in flames in '99 after a few bad experiences.

Morales goes to the body against Jaime Morales en route to a six-round unanimous decision victory in September 2002 in Las Vegas. "El Toro" has since stepped up to eight-rounders, and observers predict the aggressive Mexican-American prospect will do his best work as a 10- and 12-round fighter.

Morales made the U.S. Pan-American team in '99, though he was denied the chance to compete when he came in a pound overweight at training camp in Colorado Springs, Colorado, and was not allowed to weigh in again. El Toro then lost in a regional tournament and never made it to the 2000 Olympic Trials. But as an amateur in '99, he did defeat Dante Craig, who was the U.S. Olympic representative at the Sydney Games.

Morales' setbacks, however, have left some resentment.

"I just felt like I didn't get a chance, like they didn't want me in the Olympics," Morales said. "The Olympic thing is still in the back of my mind. The amateur experience motivated me even more, it's made me more determined. But I've tried to put it in the past and try to focus on my professional career."

Contra Costa Times boxing writer Jay Heater has watched Morales' progress since the fighter's amateur days. Though Heater is not ready to proclaim Morales as the clear successor to Kostya Tszyu, the San Francisco-area reporter does believe Morales has the skills to go far with boxing.

"Art doesn't have the power to take someone out in the first two rounds, but there's something there that makes you believe he can be a better 10- and 12-round fighter than he is a six-round fighter," Heater said. "He's a slow starter that fights better as a fight goes on. Arturo can box. He looks really sharp and he moves well, and when he wants to be a good defensive fighter, he can be. He certainly has enough talent to be a contender. Nothing seems to faze him. I don't know if he'll ever be a world champion, but I definitely think he can make some money."

Charles E. Kelly, who co-manages Morales with Cameron Dunkin, feels his fighter is very mature for his age and might be ready to step up to the next level soon.

"We feel Art is very savvy for someone at his experience level," Kelly said. "So far, we've been pleased with Arturo. We'd like to build him up to get a title shot sometime next spring, in 2004. He's moving up and that's the plan. He's progressed exactly the way we thought he would, and we're encouraged by that." ■

COLLECTOR'S

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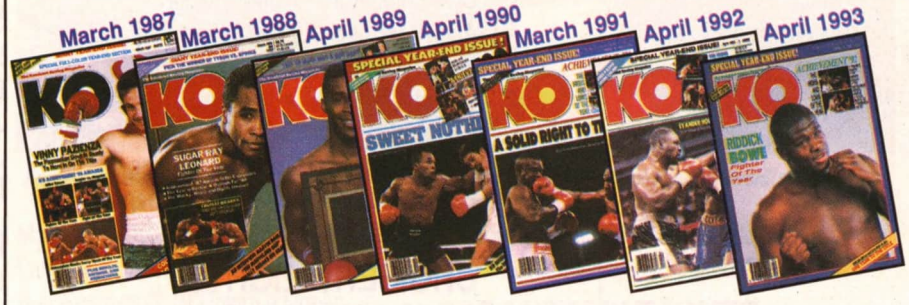

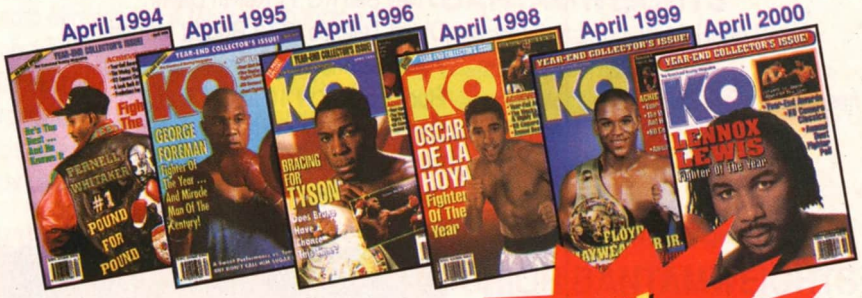

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Henry Akinwande W 12 Timo Hoffman
Herbie Hide KO 1 Joseph Chingangu
Ray Austin W 8 Sedreck Fields
Attila Levin W 10 Fernely Feliz
Sergei Liakhovich KO 5 Sione Asipeli
Robert Daniels KO 4 Alex Gonzalez
Willi Fischer KO 2 Gene Pukall
Imani Lee W 6 Kelvin Hale
Cyril Seror W 10 Antoine Palatis
Audley Harrison KO 2 Matthew Ellis
Roman Greenberg KO 3 Troy Beets
Malcolm Tann KO 1 Wallace McDaniel
Ruslan Chagaev KO 3 Zak Graham
Hearn Mahler KO 6 Michael Bennett
Patrice L'Heureux KO 3 Tali Kulhaapai
B.J. Flores W 4 Jimmie Franklin

CRUISERWEIGHTS

O'Neil Bell KO 11 Kelvin Davis
David Telesco KO 3 Robert Muhammad
Pietro Aurino W 12 Jesper Kristiansen
Rudiger May W 10 Ismail Abdul
Daniel Rowsell KO 2 Wayne Basilio
Mark Hobson KO 2 Muslim Biarslanov
Damon Reed W 6 Allen Smith

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS

Glencoffe Johnson W 12 Eric Harding
Thomas Ulrich W 12 Graciano Rocchigiani
Silvio Branco KO 5 Zoltan Beres
Kamel Amrane W 8 Zoltan Beres
Rico Hoye W 12 Prince Badi Ajamu
Elvis Michailenko KO 4 Hastings Rasani
Hugo Hernan Garay KO 1 Hector Sotelo
Darnell Wilson KO 1 Charles Lee
Adrian Diaconu KO 5 Ron Cobbs

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS

Danilo Haussler W 12 Rachid Kanfouah
Danny Green KO 5 Jason DeLisle
Jeff Lacy KO 2 Anwar Oshana
Jean-Paul Mendy W 8 Sergei Karanevich
Daniel Edouard W 6 Romaro Johnson

MIDDLEWEIGHTS

Sergey Tatevosyan W 12
James Obede Toney
Hassine Cherifi W 10 Didier Mupeko
Jermain Taylor KO 4 Nicholas Cervera
Sam Soliman W 12 Nader Hamdan
Tokunbo Olajide W 10 Jesus Valverde
Eric Regan KO 2 Ron Weaver
Jerry Elliott KO 1 Alexander Polizzi

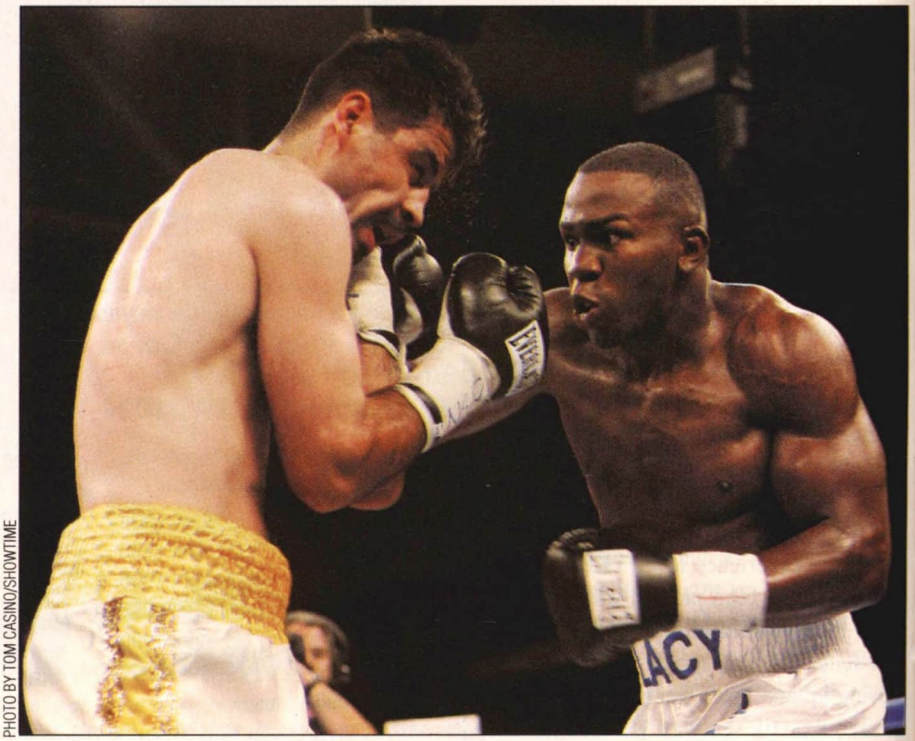

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

Super middleweight Jeff Lacy rips Anwar Oshana with a right

Hector Velazco KO 8 Andras Galfi
Jorge Sclarandi W 12 Marcos Silvano Diaz
Jesse Brinkley KO 1 Cleveland Corder
Kenny Ellis KO 4 Antoine Robinson
Felix Sturm W 10 Tshepo Mashego
Joachime Alcine W 6 Leonard Townsend
Ruben Williams KO 1 Tony Kern

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS

Javier Castillejo KO 1 Diego Castillo
Kassim Ouma W 12 Angel Hernandez
Kofi Jantuah KO 1 Jose Luis Rodriguez
Takaloo W 12 Jose Rosa Gomez
Jason Papillion KO 4 Benji Singleton
Kermit Cintron KO 1 Luis Rosado
Kuvanych Toygonbayev W 10 Andrey Tsurkan
Gary Lockett W 10 Yuri Tsarenko
Charles Whittaker KO 2 Alex Carillo
Sergej Dzinziruk KO 2 Marcelo Rodriguez
Jimmy Lange W 8 Chad Greenleaf
Yuri Foreman W 6 Sam Sparkman

WELTERWEIGHTS

Emmanuel Clottey KO 10 Muhammad Abdullaev
Randall Bailey W 8 Reggie Strickland
Chris Smith KO 6 Grover Wiley
Noufel Ben Rabah KO 3 James Swan
Brice Faradji KO 6 Malik Cherchari
Jauquin Gallardo W 10 Miguel Figueroa
Walter Crucce Tech. Win 5 Sergio Acuna
Sam Harvey W 10 Rico Tan
David Estrada W 8 Vince Harris
Paul Malignaggi W 6 Shad Howard
Paul Delgado W 8 Wilmer Torres
Guillermo Saputo KO 3 Fredy Blanco
James Kirkland KO 3 Sergio Soto

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS

Sharmba Mitchell W 12 Ben Tackie
James Leija KO 4 Adan Casillas
Michael Warrick W 10 Emanuel Augustus
Carlos Maussa W 12 Hicklet Lau
Francisco Bojado KO 6 William Adamyan
Ernesto Zavala W 10 Henry Bruseles
Kengo Nagashima KO 3 Chalamdan Sishtradtrakarn
Gary Balletto KO 4 Frank Houghtaling
Bradley Pryce W 10 Ivan Kirpa
Shingo Eguchi KO 5 Motoki Sasaki

LIGHTWEIGHTS

Leonard Dorin D 12 Paul Spadafora *(Retain Respective Titles)*
Carlos Hernandez KO 2 Moises Pedroza *(Non-Title Bout)*
Nate Campbell D 10 Edelmiro Martinez
Juan Diaz W 10 Eleazar Contreras

PHOTO BY ED MULHOLLAND

Andrey Tsurkan fields a jab from Kuvanych Toygonbayev in an entertaining junior middleweight duel

Matt Zegan KO 4 Manuel Gomes
Lamont Pearson W 8 Isidro Tejedor
Koji Arisawa W 10 Daisuke Ugajin
Pedro Miranda KO 4 Mousse Abahraoui
Koba Gogoladze W 8 Carl Johanneson
Martin O'Malley W 8 Julian Romero
Franky Leroy KO 3 Kirkor Kirkorov
Luis Villalta KO 4 Jose Dos Soto-Karras
Francisco Lorenzo W 10 Genaro Trazancos

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS

Manuel Bocanegra KO 7 Daniel Attah
Orlando Salido KO 2 Radford Beasley
Marcos Licona W 10 Cesar Figueroa
Bobby Pacquiao W 12 Baby Lorona Jr.
Tontcho Tontchev W 6 Rakhim Mingaleev
Janos Nagy W 12 Victor Hugo Paz

FEATHERWEIGHTS

Vuyani Bungu W 10 Takalani Ndlovu
Joe Morales W 10 Antonio Cermeno
Emanuel Lucero W 6 Marty Robbins
Eiichi Sugama W 10 Ruben Estanislao
Roy Rutheford W 12 Jamie McKeever
Cuauhtemoc Vargas W 8 Jaime Orrantia
Angel Mata KO 1 Adam Carrera

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS

Israel Vasquez KO 10 Jorge Eliecer Julio
Heriberto Ruiz W 10 Clarence Vinson
Enrique Sanchez Tech. Draw 2 Nelson Medina
Danny Romero W 12 Trinidad Mendoza
Jose Rojas KO 3 Celestino Caballero
Jorge Lacierva KO 9 Gerardo Espinoza
Erik Rodriguez W 10 Jason Adams

BANTAMWEIGHTS

Veerapol Sahaprom W 12 Hugo Dianzo *(Retains WBC Title)*
Fernando Montiel KO 2 Ruben Sanchez-Leon
Mauricio Pastrana KO 2 Mike Trejo
Robert Isaszegi W 12 Andrei Kostin
Hozumi Hasegawa W 12 Jess Maca
Vusi Malinga W 12 Siyabonga Nyanga

JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS

Komrith Eveready KO 4 Abbey Mnisi
Francisco Arce KO 5 Sandro Oviedo

FLYWEIGHTS

Pongsaklek Wonjongkam W 12 Randy Mangubat *(Retains WBC Title)*
Lorenzo Parra KO 7 Diego Martinez
Alexander Mahmutov KO 8 Mimoun Chent
Dale Robinson W 12 Zolile Mbityi

JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS

Shingo Yamaguchi W 12 Wendyl Janiola
Hugo Cazares KO 4 Valentin Leon
Sarikalek Ekarin W 10 Arman De La Cruz
Tatsuo Hayashida W 10 Junichi Ebisuoka

STRAWWEIGHTS

Edgar Cardenas KO 10 Miguel Barrera *(Wins IBF Title)*
Sithembile Kibiti KO 10 Khulile Makeba
Pornsawan Propramook KO 4 Martin Mahlangu

BOXING EQUIPMENT
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PRESENTS

The RING

FIGHTER *of the* MONTH

It wasn't a matter of *if* Glencoffe Johnson was going to lose; it was a matter of *how badly* he was going to lose. After all, when Johnson steps up, he invariably falls short, and Eric Harding looked to be Johnson's biggest step up in more than three years. Harding had been rated among the top light heavyweights in the world for several years and had given Roy Jones one of his most difficult fights, and Johnson was supposed to be little more than a credible opponent against whom he could launch his latest comeback.

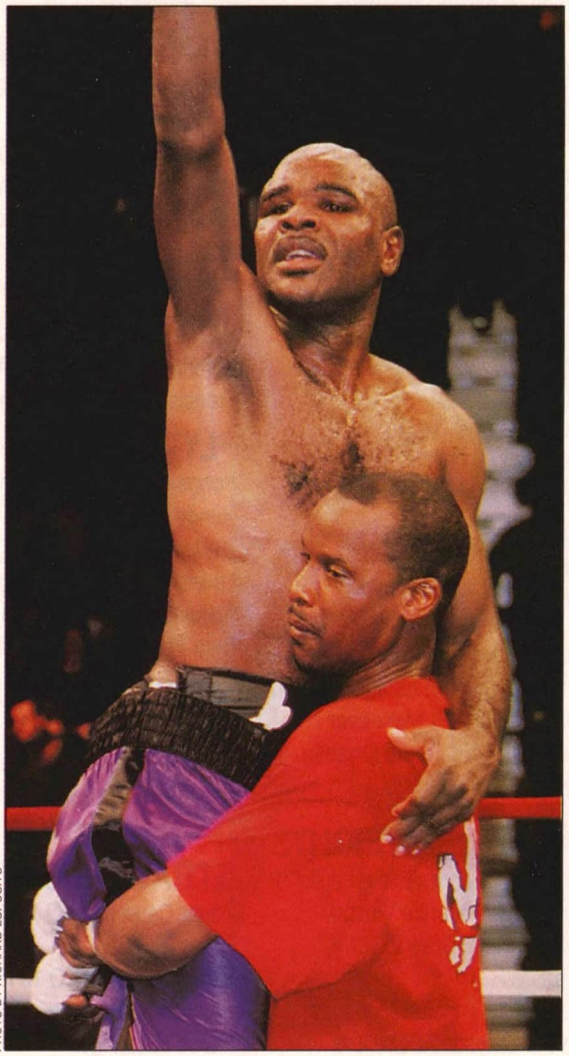


PHOTO BY RICHARD ESPOSITO

But Johnson, whose previous two fights ended in a controversial decision loss to world-rated Julio Gonzalez and a rip-off draw against unbeaten Daniel Judah, was hungry for a win. He took advantage of Harding's lethargic start to build an early lead, and nearly scored a knockout in the ninth round. But after sapping himself of most of his energy reserves gunning for the finish, Johnson had very little left for the final three rounds, and needed plenty of heart and chin to hold off Harding's rally. He had just enough of both, and his early lead was enough to carry him to victory by unanimous decision.

Johnson has already challenged for titles at middleweight and super middleweight, and after beating Harding, the Jamaican-born fighter called out Antonio Tarver, who holds two belts at light heavyweight. In all likelihood, Johnson would come up short against Tarver. But, after bumping off the number-three light heavy in the world and taking his ranking, Johnson certainly deserves the opportunity to try for another upset.

• • • •

Glencoffe Johnson

RINGSIDE REPORTS

Leonard Dorin D 12 Paul Spadafora

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania: Despite this being the toughest match of his career, the usual Spadafora hysteria wasn't quite up to fever pitch, and ticket sales were off a bit. Maybe it was the increasing predictability that Spadafora's efficient boxing had made of his defenses. Maybe it was the carping by the Dorin camp over the officials, which threatened to scuttle the bout. Maybe it was the paranoid security by which entry to the building made a trip to the airport a lark by comparison. Whatever the reason, once Spadafora, 134½, Pittsburgh, and Dorin, 135, Montreal, Quebec, hooked it up in a fight to unify the IBF and WBA lightweight belts, the contest took on a life of its own.

Dorin, defending the WBA belt for the second time, adopted a strategy that had previously eluded Spadafora's mesmerized opponents: throw punches. The compact Romanian kept a high and tight guard that intercepted many of Spadafora's hooking blows. Meanwhile, Dorin effectively walked "Spaddy" down behind the time-honored anti-southpaw weapon, the straight right lead. Tommy Loughran's motto, "Box when you can, fight when you must," was not lost on Spadafora, who was making his eighth defense of the IBF strap. He settled down on his heels and dug in with combinations in a no-nonsense attempt to wrest the contest away from the chugging invader. But by the third, Dorin was whacking "The Pittsburgh Kid" with a regularity he'd never experienced before. Repeated rights, with a sprinkling of hooks to keep Spadafora guessing, landed with embarrassing frequency, as local fans became jittery.

The fourth looked like a Waterloo for the local hero when a bad cut opened on the left eye. A third-round cut to Dorin's right eye would be well controlled by Bob Miller, but with Spadafora's regular cutman out through illness, trainer Jesse Reid was forced into double duty, and the gash would continue to plague the hometown fighter. Nonetheless, the IBF titlist kept searching for answers, and took advantage of "Leo The Lion's" high guard to re-establish the vaunted body attack that hadn't been seen in recent fights.

Dorin pestered Spadafora's cuts again in the seventh, as fans set up a "U-S-A" cheer to inspire their hero. This might have had more effect on the visitor, as Dorin bore down in a punishing eighth to twice stagger Spaddy with rights. But Spadafora's style finally began clicking in the ninth, and the crowd erupted.

Spadafora, 27, shook the WBA titlist with an inside right in the 10th, possibly his best punch of the fight. Both fought doggedly through the stretch, with Dorin, 33, less able to walk his man down and the crowd fervidly urging Spadafora on. The Romanian was cut for the first time since the early going, as both were bloodied in a frenzied final session with the fight on the line. Spadafora, 36-0-1 (14), started strong in the 12th, but Dorin, 21-0-1 (7), was making himself a human cannonball by the final bell.

Pat Russell (USA) scored 115-113 for Dorin, Guillermo Perez Pineda (Panama) had it 115-114 for Spadafora, and Gary Merritt (USA) left both unbeaten with titles intact by handing in a 114-114 tally. Ironically, an unofficial poll of local fans unanimously saw the visitor winning. THE RING agreed, scoring 115-113 for Dorin.

The referee was Rudy Battle (USA).

Television: HBO

Promoter: Michael Acri Boxing Promotions

(5-17-03)

J. R. Jowett

Glencoffe Johnson W 12 Eric Harding

Bronx, New York: Harding entered his bout with Johnson hoping to earn either a rubber match with Antonio Tarver or perhaps even another crack at Roy Jones. But after dropping a unanimous 12-round decision to Johnson at Jimmy's Bronx Cafe, the 30-year-old Harding found himself in the unenviable position of deciding whether to start rebuilding all over again or call it a career.

For the hard-luck Johnson, it was a major win, a fitting reward after a controversial loss to Julio Gonzalez and an equally controversial draw with Daniel Judah in his previous two starts.

Johnson, a Jamaican now living in Miami, looked determined from the start. He seemed more energetic than usual and applied steady pressure, sensibly banging away at Harding's lanky body whenever he got within range. Although considered pretty much a journeyman since losing a bid to take the IBF middleweight belt from Bernard Hopkins in 1997, the 33-year-old underdog was unperturbed by Harding's southpaw style and definitely came to win.

Harding, 174½, suffered a cut over his right eye in the third, which referee Arthur Mercante Jr. (USA) ruled was caused by a punch, although TV replays showed that it was actually an accidental clash of heads that opened the gash. As it turned out, Harding's corner did a good job of patching the cut, but had it worsened and the fight been stopped, Johnson, 173½, would have been a TKO winner.

Johnson went after the cut in the fourth and jolted Harding with a sharp right to the head in the fifth. Harding, a Philadelphian now living in Connecticut, landed a few crisp punches in the sixth, and scored well again at the end of the seventh, but seemed too lethargic to launch any sort of sustained attack.

PHOTO BY STEVE MATTEO/HBO

Spadafora lands a jab against the on-rushing Dorin

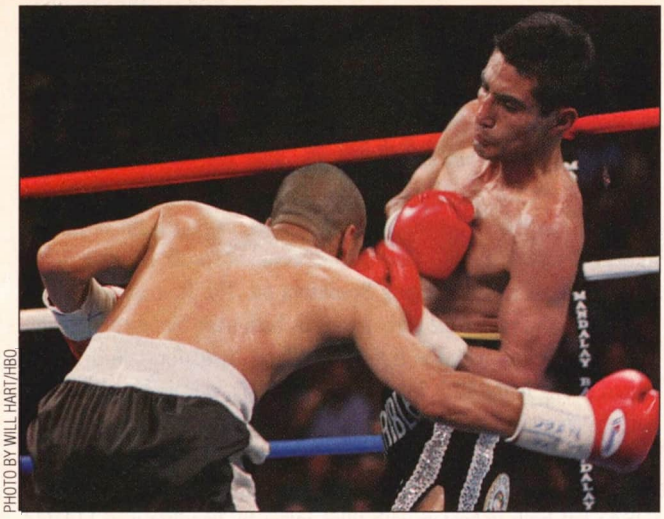


PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Morales walks Velardez into a crushing left uppercut

A fired-up Johnson went all out in the ninth, chasing Harding around the ring and landing solidly to both body and head. It looked momentarily like Harding might cave, but he sucked it up and made it through the round.

The big effort in the ninth appeared to have drained much of Johnson's energy, and Harding, 21-3-1 (7), did his best work in the 10th and 11th rounds. He hurt Johnson with hard lefts in both rounds, but never succeeded in putting him down.

Both were weary in the final round, and Johnson, who obviously felt he'd already done enough to take the decision, spent a lot of time backing up. But by then, Harding was too pooped to take advantage of the situation.

All three American judges, Tom Kaczmarek, Melvina Lathan, and George DeGabriel, scored the bout for Johnson by a 116-112 margin.

The victory earned Johnson, 39-9-1 (27), the USBA light heavyweight title and the number-three ranking by THE RING.

Television: Fox SportsNet

Promoter: Final Forum & Goossen-Tutor

(5-18-03)

Erik Morales KO 5 Bobby Boy Velardez

Las Vegas, Nevada: There are varying degrees of mismatches, but few are as disgraceful as this one, which pitted pound-for-pound entrant and WBC featherweight titleholder Morales against light-hitting clubfighter Velardez on the Oscar De La Hoya-Yory Boy Campas undercard at Mandalay Bay. While it's hardly surprising that the WBC recognized what amounted to target practice as a title fight, the fact that the Nevada State Athletic Commission also sanctioned it reflects poorly on a commission that prides itself on being the best in the United States.

Velardez, 126, San Bernardino, California, didn't come to take the money and run. He did what he always does, walk in and throw punches. But while that has worked fairly well against other clubfighters and fringe contenders, it was suicide against a man of Morales' caliber.

"El Terrible" allowed Velardez, 22, to connect with some light blows early, but late in the first round he landed a left hook to the mouth that put the challenger on the deck. Velardez gamely scrambled up at the count of four, and was immediately rescued by the bell.

Undaunted, Velardez bravely charged forward in the second and third. He was very busy, but his blows had absolutely no adverse effect on Morales, who punished his rival with hard rights.

Morales, 126, Tijuana, Mexico, cranked up his left hook to the body in the fourth, and Velardez was soon down again after fielding a left to the gut and a right to the head. Showing more valor than common sense, Velardez, 24-5-1 (6), beat the count, only to be decked again later in the round by a series of combinations. This time he barely beat the count, but the bell rang before Morales could finish the job.

Why Velardez' corner sent him out for the fifth is anybody's guess, but whatever the reason, they did him a disfavor. And when Morales floored him again with a left hook to the body, referee Kenny Bayless (USA) called a halt to the slaughter at the 1:02 mark.

The 26-year-old Morales, who was one pound overweight on his first trip to the scales, said both before and after the fight that it would be his last at 126 pounds. But his promoter, Bob Arum, told HBO's Larry Merchant the opposite. Fans are eager to see a rubber match with arch rival Marco Antonio Barrera, and it would be sure to be a money-spinner, but if Morales, 44-1 (33), sticks to his guns, it will have to be at a catchweight.

Television: HBO Pay-Per-View

Promoter: Top Rank

(5-3-03)

Jorge Arce Tech. Win 6 Melchor Cob-Castro

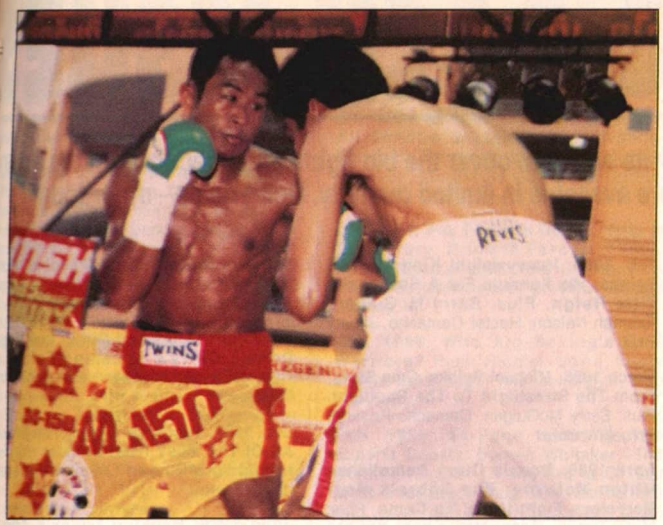
Las Vegas, Nevada: Cob-Castro couldn't quite do what the scales were able to do—put Arce on his back—but he did manage to give Arce his second major scare in 24 hours. Nevertheless, Cob-Castro came up short in his bid to wrest the WBC light flyweight title from Arce, losing via inconclusive six-round technical decision on the undercard of the De La Hoya-Campas bout at Mandalay Bay.

Arce's troubles began at the weigh-in. He initially scaled 111 pounds, three over the class limit, and after he checked in at 107 pounds on his second attempt, the 23-year-old Mexican promptly passed out from dehydration. He was revived and cleared to fight the next day, by which time he unofficially weighed 124 pounds—a full five divisions above junior flyweight. Boasting a 4½-inch height advantage over the 5'2" Cob-Castro, who weighed 108 officially and was unofficially 119 at fight time, Arce's third title defense had all the appearances of a physical mismatch.

But it turned out to be plenty competitive, and Cob-Castro might even have been in position to win if not for the premature ending due to a cut above Arce's left eye. The 35-year-old Mexican challenger

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Bloody Arce fires a long right at Cob-Castro



Veerapol outboxes plucky challenger Dianzo

appeared to win the close opening round with his effective body combinations, though Arce seemed to do the slightly better work in a nip-and-tuck second round. In the third, Cob-Castro began catching "Travieso" with flush right-hand counters, and a short right hand midway through the stanza staggered Arce badly enough that his left glove grazed the canvas. Referee Joe Cortez (USA) correctly ruled it a knockdown, and the remainder of the round was fought with tremendous aggression and fury by both tiny warriors.

The fourth round was by far Arce's best, as he landed several hard shots, especially to the body, but it was late in that round that a clash of heads resulted in a nasty gash over his left eye. Early in the fifth, Cortez called timeout for Dr. Margaret Goodman to take a look at the wound, and she suggested that Cortez let the fighters finish the round. Moments later, a big left by Cob-Castro, 66-9-4 (30), wobbled Arce and forced him to hold, but the defending titlist may have won the round anyway because of his greater activity throughout.

Dr. Goodman let the fighters continue for one more round—another close one—but then advised Cortez to stop the fight after the sixth. They went to the scorecards, which all had Arce ahead. Lou Filippo (USA) and Bill Graham (USA) both had it 59-55 (awarding Arce every round except for the knockdown round, and scoring that one only 10-9 for Cob-Castro), while Dalby Shirley (USA) had it a more realistic 58-56. THE RING had Arce up 57-56.

"I was sick before the fight and I drank a lot of liquids, that's why I was overweight," said Arce, 34-3-1 (25), afterward. "I was fine, I'm a very strong person, and I knew I could recuperate."

In response to questions regarding whether he'll need to move up in weight, Arce said, "We're going to discuss it with my team. I think we probably will move up, but we're going to discuss it."

Television: HBO Pay-Per-View

Promoter: Top Rank

(5-3-03)

Veerapol Sahaprom W 12 Hugo Dianzo

Bangkok, Thailand: One year to the day after he made his ninth successful defense of the WBC bantamweight title, Veerapol—who engaged in three non-title bouts in the 12 months in between—reached double-digits in defenses by turning away game Mexican challenger Dianzo. The 34-year-old Veerapol won a lopsided unanimous decision in a crisp, clean, action-packed fight in front of more than 5,000 fans at the open-air Stadium of the Mall Shopping Center.

The 28-year-old Dianzo was no easy mark, having knocked down Paulie Ayala en route to a highly controversial decision loss in a challenge for the WBA bantam belt in March 2001. But Veerapol was dominant, winning every round but the first and the 10th with his accurate and well-timed jabs and combinations. Judges Kazuo Abe (Japan) and Gary Ritter (USA) scored it 118-110, while David Chung (Korea) had it 117-111, all for Veerapol, 41-1-1 (29).

"I don't think I can win this belt as long as Veerapol is champion," admitted a humbled Dianzo, 29-9-1 (14), afterward.

The referee was Nonuaki Uraithani (Japan).

(5-1-03)

Edelmiro Martinez D 10 Nate Campbell

Atlantic City, New Jersey: Thanks to a controversial point deduction, a crucial knockdown, and some dubious judging that made those two factors matter more than they probably should have, junior lightweight contender Campbell avoided losing his second fight in a row. Instead, he eked out a draw in the main event of the final show of NBC's May boxing experiment, spoiling a breakthrough performance by Martinez.

Judge John Poturaj (USA) scored the fight 94-94, while Barbara Perez somehow gave the nod to Campbell, 95-93. Melvina Lathan (USA) scored in favor of Martinez, 95-93, as did THE RING.

It was clear when the 10-rounder was over that both fighters had taken some punishment in this entertaining bout. The 31-year-old Campbell, 131, Jacksonville, Florida, was all lumped up and bruised around his eyes, while the 34-year-old Martinez, 131, Bronx, New York, sported nasty gashes on and above his eyebrows.

The pivotal moment in the fight came when referee Earl Brown (USA) deducted a point from Martinez in the fifth for excessive holding. The call was extremely controversial, and Martinez, 20-2-1 (9), would have won a split decision had he not lost that point. "The referee had no reason to take a point off," Martinez said. "He never warned me, and when he took the point off, I was being held by Campbell."

In the early going, Martinez boxed intelligently, while Campbell, 23-1-1 (21), tried looking for a quick fix, throwing looping overhand rights designed to knock "Tiger" out. Martinez frustrated Campbell with a consistent jab, and "The Galaxxy Warrior" began to lose his composure early in the fight. By the fifth, Martinez had a wide cut open on his left eyebrow, which he maintained was due to a headbutt. In the seventh, Martinez' jab opened cuts on Campbell's left eyelid and eyebrow.

When Brown called the ringside physician to look at Campbell's bloody cuts in the eighth, The Galaxxy Warrior started to fear the fight would be stopped. He unleashed a barrage of punches on Martinez and knocked the veteran down, but Campbell could not finish him off. Punched out, Campbell hung on in the ninth and 10th rounds, as Martinez connected with left hooks.

"I just took too long between fights," Campbell said afterward of his four-month layoff since his close decision loss to Joel Casamayor. "That's just too much time between fights to fight a guy like that. Martinez was good, but I thought I did enough to beat him."

Not too many people would agree with Campbell on that last point.

Promoter: Main Events

(5-17-03)

Joseph Santoliquito ■

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Dec. 1986: Mike Tyson's Drive To The Title: Ruthless, Brutal, Unstoppable. Plus: Hagler-Leonard, Meldrick Taylor, Thomas Hearns, Tyrell Biggs.

Jan. 1987: The Formidable Mike Tyson: Primed For His Title Challenge. Plus: Michael Spinks, Vinny Pazienza, Bobby Czyz, Curry-Honeyghan, Hagler-Leonard, Berbick-Tyson.

Feb. 1987: Mark Breland: The Class Of '84. Plus: Thomas Hearns, Lloyd Honeyghan, Camacho-Rosario, Olympians.

March 1987: Year In Review. Plus: Marvin Johnson, Tyson-Berbick, Larry Holmes.

April 1987: Tyson vs. Bonecrusher: Who Will Survive Their Unification War? Plus: Hagler-Leonard, Greg Haugen, John Mugabi, Julio Cesar Chavez.

May 1987: Hagler-Leonard: Super Fight Or Super Slaughter? Plus: Mike Tyson, Chris Reid, The Dynamite Dozen.

June 1987: Shining Stars: Pazienza, Holyfield, Curry. Plus: Hagler-Leonard, Bobby Czyz.

July 1987: After The Bonecrusher Bore: Mike Tyson's Task—Rekindle The Excitement. Plus: Thomas Hearns, George Foreman, Tyrell Biggs, Spinks-Cooney.

Aug. 1987: The Return Of The Sugar Man: After Conquering Hagler, Now Aiming For Hearns? Plus: Boxing lists, Spinks-Cooney, Mike McCallum.

Sept. 1987: Mike Olajide Goes To War: "The Silk" Shows He's More Than Just Style. Plus: Evander Holyfield, Duane Thomas, Mike McCallum, dream fights.

Oct. 1987: Erasing The Doubts—Vinny Pazienza Proves He's A Phenom, Not A Phony. Plus: Mike Tyson, Williams-Coop[illegible], Spinks-Cooney, George Foreman.

Nov. 1987: Down And Out In Las Vega[illegible] Donald Curry's Crushing Fall. Plu[illegible] Duarte-Davila, Thomas Hearns, Meldri[illegible] Taylor.

Dec. 1987: Tyson vs. Biggs: The Frazi[illegible] Ali Of The '80s? Plus: Evander Holyfie[illegible] Miguel Lora, Shawn O'Sullivan, harde[illegible] hitters.

June 1989: Ranking Today's Top [illegible] Fighters. Plus: Taylor-Meekins, Starlin[illegible] Honeyghan, Leonard-Hearns, John[illegible] Bos.

Aug. 1989: Leonard-Hearns: Dressed [illegible] Kill. Plus: Azumah Nelson, Larry Holme[illegible] Michael Nunn.

Oct. 1989: Power! What Gives A Punc[illegible] Its Cruch? Plus: Ray Robinson, Watso[illegible] Benn, Virgil Hill, Nunn-Barkley, Em[illegible] Griffith.

Dec. 1989: On The Money! Mike Tys[illegible] Kayos Carl Williams. Plus: Summ[illegible] Sizzlers color insert, Julian Jackso[illegible] Anthony Hembrick, Camacho-Pazienza

Feb. 1990: Leonard-Duran: An Analys[illegible] Of The Grudge Match. Plus: Leonar[illegible] Duran color insert, Whitaker-Nelson, Mi[illegible] Tyson, Marlin Starling.

April 1990: Year-End Special: A Divisio[illegible] By-Division Analysis. Plus: Year-end co[illegible] insert, Michael Spinks, the heavyweig[illegible] legends reunite, Al Certo.

June 1990: George Foreman—Th[illegible] World Is Falling At His Feet. Plus: Re[illegible] hot heavyweights color insert, Evande[illegible] Holyfield, Tyrell Biggs, Richie Sandoval.

Oct. 1990: The Real Deal: Why Bust[illegible] Douglas Will Whip Evander Holyfiel[illegible] Plus: Rocky Graziano, Whitaker-Nelso[illegible] Ken Norton, Terry Norris, James [illegible] Corbett.

Dec. 1990: Buster Douglas: Did He Leav[illegible] His Best In Tokyo? Plus: Roge[illegible] Mayweather, James J. Jeffries, The Ye[illegible] That Was: 1978.

Feb. 1991: For The Best Of Tw[illegible] Divisions, All Roads Lead To Chave[illegible] Plus: Paez-Lopez, Glenwood Brow[illegible] Leonard-Norris preview, Jack Johnson.

April 1991: Boxing's Bible Belter: Th[illegible] Inner Strength Of Evander Holyfiel[illegible] Plus: Michael Carbajal, Lopez-Mitche[illegible] 1990 in review, Jack Dempsey.

June 1991: Evander Holyfield's Tas[illegible] How To Get Rid Of 260 Pounds Of Flab [illegible] Five Minutes. Plus: Boxing's best, Meldri[illegible] Taylor, Hearns-Hill preview, Ma[illegible] Schmeling.

Aug. 1991: Tyson The Terrible: Migh[illegible] Mike Is Boxing's Baddest Man Agai[illegible] Plus: Roberto Duran, Lindell Holmes, Ju[illegible] Cesar Chavez, Primo Carnera, Muhamma[illegible] Ali.

Oct. 1991: 12 Angry Men—The Meanes[illegible] Fighters In Boxing. Plus: Braddoc[illegible] Mercer-Morrison, Orlando Canizale[illegible] meanest fighters, Year That Was: 1967.

Dec. 1991: Will A Few More Of Thes[illegible] Finish Off Mike Tyson? Plus: Ezza[illegible] Charles, George Foreman, Holyfiel[illegible] Tyson, Floyd Patterson, John Dav[illegible] Jackson.

Feb. 1992: Can Boxing Survive Without Mike Tyson? Plus: Julian Jackson, Mitchell-Lopez, Rocky Marciano, The Year That Was: 1972.

April 1992: Evander Holyfield: With Every Win, He Loses Respect. Plus: Ingemar Johansson, Rock Newman, year-end review, Dempsey-Firpo.

June 1992: Boxing's Thrill-A-Minute Champion: How Much Time Is Left For Meldrick Taylor? Plus: Muhammad Ali, Holyfield-Bowe, Iran Barkley, Kelcie Banks, Jemal Hinton.

Aug. 1992: Holmes Challenges Holyfield: The Old Man Has A Chance If ... Plus: Iran Barkley, Eddie Cook, The Year That Was: 1952, George Foreman.

Oct. 1992: Michael Moorer Explodes! The Heavyweight With A Short Fuse. Plus: Bobby Czyz, Norris-Taylor, Riddick Bowe, The Year That Was: 1961.

Dec. 1992: Mike Tyson: He Could Get Out. Plus: Tony Tucker, Eddie Hopson, Ruddock-Lewis preview.

Feb. 1993: Chavez Tortures Camacho: Can He Become Greater Than Sugar Ray Robinson? Plus: Michael Nunn, Tim Littles, trainers, Foreman-Morrison preview.

April 1993: Riddick Bowe & Lennox Lewis Lead The Heavyweight Resurgence. Plus: Bowe-Holyfield round 10, Jemal Hinton, Dave Tiberi.

June 1993: The Old Man And The Fee: At $5-Million Per, George Foreman Will Never Retire. Plus: Morrison-Williams, Genaro Hernandez, Terry Norris.

Aug. 1993: Bowe, No! Can Jesse Ferguson Be 1993's Buster Douglas? Plus: Carbajal, Azumah, Harding-McCallum, Eric Griffin, next great heavyweight.

Dec. 1993: Riddick Bowe's Year In Preview: Lennox Lewis Is The Least Of His Problems. Plus: Michael Carbajal, Ali-Foreman, Ricardo Lopez, Larry Hazzard.

Feb. 1994: Chavez-Whitaker: Was The Fix In? Plus: Chiquita Gonzalez, overrated/underrated, Corbett-Choynski.

April 1994: Hungry At The Wrong Time: Has Riddick Bowe Become The New Buster Douglas? Plus: Michael Bentt, Buddy McGirt, Jorge Luis Gonzalez, George Dixon, Joe Gans, Joe Walcott.

Aug. 1994: Beating Bredahl Was No Oscar-Winning Peformance: Why De La Hoya Still Has A Lot To Prove. Plus: Christy Martin, overrated/underrated, Little-Nunn, Foreman-Holmes preview, Young Jack Thompson.

Oct. 1994: Michael Moorer's Image: Is It All Shadow & Light? Plus: Evander Holyfield, Egerton Marcus, John Michael Johnson, Gorilla Jones, Bowe-Donald preview.

Dec. 1994: Paz Survives Duran: "Pain Is Temporary, Pride Is Forever." Plus: Pernell Whitaker, Julio Cesar Chavez, Tony Green, Patterson-Kelley preview, George Godfrey.

Jan. 1995: Who Are Boxing's Real Warriors? Plus: Riddick Bowe, Marty Jakubowski, super middleweights, Bob Armstrong.

Feb. 1995 (84-Page Special): The Experts Debate: Pernell Whitaker—The Greatest Fighter Of His Era ... Or The Most Overrated? Plus: Greatest fighters who never won title, boxing's bad boys, pro debuts, Bruce Flowers.

April 1995: George Foreman (1974) vs. George Foreman (1995). Plus: Riddick Bowe, cheap-shot artists, catchweight fights, Young Peter Jackson.

June 1995: Foreman, Chavez, De La Hoya, & Jones—Hollywood Boxing Movies You'll Never See. Plus: Rocky Balboa, fighters we want out, Sosa-Williams.

Aug. 1995: Why Mike Tyson Won't Regain The Title. Plus: Alonzo Highsmith, overrated/underrated, Triple-Crown Showdown.

Oct. 1995 (All-Heavyweight Issue): More Hittable Than Lovable—Can Big George Survive Another Axel Breakdown? Plus: Mike Tyson, Larry Holmes, Bruce Seldon, Joe Louis.

Dec. 1995: Lewis vs. Morrison, Bowe vs. Holyfield: Who Will Survive To Fight Tyson? Plus: James Thunder, Sammy Fuentes, tattoos.

Feb. 1996: Roy Jones vs. Pernell Whitaker: WORLD BOXING Picks The Pound-For-Pound Best. Plus: Frankie Randall, Butterbean, two-sport boxers.

April 1996: The 10 Best Fights Of 1996. Plus: Jeff Fenech, Quartey & Trinidad, fantasy boxing.

June 1996: Hey, Roy Jones, You Say You're Bored? Take These Six Steps To Tyson. Plus: Guys never in bad fights, Lenzie Morgan, Cleveland Williams.

Fall 1996: "The Hardest Punch I Ever Landed": 10 Heavyweights Recall The Destruction. Plus: Frazier-Ali I fight poster (color), James Toney, heavyweight report card, Wilfredo Vazquez, Rocky.

Winter 1996: Myth vs. Reality. In Search Of The True Tyson (color). Plus: Lonnie Bradley, George Foreman & HBO, Bowe-Golota II preview.

Spring 1997: Is Andrew Golota Too Dangerous For Boxing? Plus: Bowe-Golota II (color), Michael Moorer, top heavyweight fights of '96, fantasy boxing, short fighters.

Summer 1997: Building The Perfect Heavyweight ... One Piece At A Time (color). Plus: Nielsen-Holmes, Heavyweight Explosion, fantasy boxing.

Fall 1997: The Search For The Next Great Heavyweight (color). Plus: Jesse Ferguson, fantasy boxing, Foreman phenomenon.

Winter 1997: If He Never Fights Again ... How Will Mike Tyson Be Remembered? (color). Plus: Roy Jones, Bert Cooper.

Spring 1998: A Look Back At '97 ... A Look Ahead To '98. Plus: Naseem Hamed (color).

Summer 1998: Tomorrow's Superstars: Six Who Will Lead Boxing Into The Next Century (color). Plus: Julio Cesar Chavez, David Tua.

Fall 1998: Piecing Together The Perfect Heavyweight Champion. Plus: Oscar De La Hoya (color), Riddick Bowe.

Winter 1998: Why Trinidad's Gonna Kick Oscar's Golden Butt (color). Plus: Foreman-Holmes, 10 fights that changed history.

Spring 1999: Oscar De La Hoya vs. Ike Quartey: WORLD BOXING Picks The Winner (color). Plus: Mike Tyson debate, 10 all-time greatest welterweight fights.

Summer 1999: To Hell With The Judges! Lennox Lewis Is The Champ! Plus: De La Hoya-Trinidad preview, anti-Tyson era, Terronn Millett.

Fall 1999: Danger Ahead! Is Oscar's Macho Madness Dangerous To His Health? Plus: Ali vs. today's top 10, kayo victims, heavyweight report card.

Winter 1999: Why De La Hoya Deserved The Decision Over Trinidad. Plus: Johnny Tapia, Mark Johnson, heavyweight report card, seniors.

Spring 2000: Now We Know Grant's A Fighter! (We Just Don't Know How Good A Fighter). Plus: Fernando Vargas, Muhammad Ali, crying game.

Summer 2000: Mosley vs. De La Hoya: Why It's Happening ... Who Will Win! Plus: Paul Spadafora, Oba Carr, suffering survivors.

Fall 2000: 10 Reasons Mike Tyson Can Beat Lennox Lewis. Plus: Arturo Gatti, Felix Trinidad, Mike Griffith.

[All-color beginning with the March 2001 issue]

March 2001: The Ultimate Boxing Ratings. Plus: Tyson-Golota, Marco Antonio Barrera, Joel Cassamayor.

July 2001: Judah vs. Tszyu: Our Forecast Of The Unification Showdown. Plus: Trinidad-Joppy preview, Dynamite Dozen, comebacks.

Nov. 2001: It's Time To Flex Your Muscles, Roy: Fight The Trinidad-Hopkins Winner Next! Plus: Laila-Jacqui, Floyd Mayweather, greatest upsets.

March 2002: Tyson At 35: "Old Too Soon, Smart Too Late" Plus: Felix Trinidad, Ricardo Lopez, Naseem Hamed, Steve Forbes, middleweight shockers.

July 2002: Jones vs. Hopkins: What Will Happen When The Trash Talk Stops. Plus: Forrest-Mosley, Arturo Gatti, Wayne McCullough, De La Hoya-Vargas preview, great junior middleweight moments.

Nov. 2002: Lennox Lewis—Is He The Best Heavyweight Since Muhammad Ali? Plus: Naseem Hamed, Kostya Tszyu, Diobelys Hurtado, Rocky Juarez, 10 fights that transcended boxing.

Feb. 2003: Can Anyone Wipe The Smile Off Oscar's Face? Plus: Lennox Lewis, Eric Lucas, Jesse James Leija, Shane Mosley, 10 all-time most exciting fighters.

June 2003: Lennox's Legacy On The Line: Will He Be Toppled In '03? Plus: Fernando Vargas, Arturo Gatti, 2002 in review.

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☐ JUL/81	☐ OCT/85	☐ DEC/87	☐ JUN/93	☐ SPR/98
☐ SEP/81	☐ NOV/85	☐ JUN/89	☐ AUG/93	☐ SUM/98
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☐ MAR/85	☐ JUN/87	☐ JUN/92	☐ FAL/96	☐ JUN/03
☐ APR/85	☐ JUL/87	☐ AUG/92	☐ WIN/96	
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ALPHABET RATINGS

The Rankings of Boxing's Three International Governing Bodies

WBA RATINGS
(Ratings as of April 2003)

HEAVYWEIGHTS
Champ: Roy Jones (USA)
1. Vitali Klitschko (UKR)
2. David Tua (NZ)
3. Hasim Rahman (USA)
4. John Ruiz (USA)
5. Mike Tyson (USA)
6. Evander Holyfield (USA)
7. Fres Oquendo (PR)
8. Kirk Johnson (CAN)
9. Faruq Saleem (USA)
10. Lamon Brewster (USA)
11. Joe Mesi (USA)
12. Juan Carlos Gomez (CUB)

CRUISERWEIGHTS
Champ: Jean Marc Mormeck (FRA)
1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. Virgil Hill (USA)
4. O'Neil Bell (USA)
5. Luis Pineda (PAN)
6. Vassiliy Jirov (KAZ)
7. Valery Brudov (RUS)
8. Alexander Gurov (UKR)
9. Daniel Rowsell (AUSTRL)
10. Fabrice Tiozzo (FRA)
11. Louis Azille (GUY)
12. Vincenzo Cantatore (ITA)

LT. HEAVYWEIGHTS
Champ: Mehdi Sahnoune (FRA)
1. Vacant
2. Lou Del Valle (USA)
3. Julio Gonzalez (USA)
4. Manuel Siaca (PR)
5. Bruno Girard (FRA)
6. David Telesco (USA)
7. Thomas Hansvoll (NOR)
8. George Jones (USA)
9. Paul Briggs (AUSTRL)
10. Montell Griffin (USA)
11. Thomas Ulrich (GER)
12. Jorge Castro (ARG)

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Unified Champ: Sven Ottke (GER)
1. Antwun Echols (USA)
2. Anthony Mundine (AUSTRL)
3. Byron Mitchell (USA)
4. Mads Larsen (DEN)
5. Mikkel Kessler (DEN)
6. Eric Lucas (CAN)
7. Danilo Haussler (GER)
8. Thomas Tate (USA)
9. Andre Thysse (SA)
10. Francisco Mora (ARG)
11. Syd Vanderpool (CAN)
12. Shannan Taylor (AUSTRL)

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Unified Champ: Bernard Hopkins (USA)
Champ: William Joppy (USA)
1. Vacant
2. Bert Schenk (GER)
3. Robert Allen (USA)
4. Maselino Masoe (AUSTRL)
5. Howard Eastman (GB)
6. Evans Ashira (DEN)
7. Hassine Cherifi (FRA)
8. Kingsley Ikeke (NIG)
9. Jermain Taylor (USA)
10. Satoru Suzuki (JAP)
11. Wayne Alexander (GB)
12. Derrell Coley (USA)

SUPER WELTERWEIGHTS
Unified Champ: Oscar De La Hoya (USA)
Champ: Alejandro T. Garcia (MEX)
1. Vacant
2. Rhoshii Wells (USA)
3. Travis Simms (USA)
4. Mamadou Thiam (FRA)
5. Shane Mosley (USA)
6. Santiago Samaniego (PAN)
7. Akira Ohigashi (JAP)
8. J.C. Candelo (COL)
9. Michael Rask (DEN)
10. Nader Hamdan (AUSTRL)
11. Roman Karmazin (RUS)
12. Fitz Vanderpool (CAN)

WELTERWEIGHTS
Unified Champ: Ricardo Mayorga (CR)
1. Vacant
2. Thomas Damgaard (DEN)
3. Michael Trabant (GER)
4. Jose Rivera (USA)
5. Vernon Forrest (USA)
6. Carlos Baldomir (ARG)
7. Felix Flores (PR)
8. James Hare (GB)
9. Kermit Cintron (PR)
10. Andrew Lewis (GUY)
11. Farhad Bakirov (UZB)
12. Elio Ortiz (VEN)

SUPER LIGHTWEIGHTS
Unified Champ: Kostya Tszyu (AUSTRL)
Champ: Vivian Harris (GUY)
1. Souleyman M'Baye (FRA)
2. Sharmba Mitchell (USA)
3. Ricky Hatton (GB)
4. Oktay Urkal (TUR)
5. Diobelys Hurtado (CUB)
6. Arturo Gatti (USA)
7. Gianluca Branco (ITA)
8. Zab Judah (USA)
9. Miguel Cotto (PR)
10. Ener Julio (COL)
11. Randall Bailey (USA)
12. Masakazu Satake (JAP)

LIGHTWEIGHTS
Champ: Leonard Dorin (CAN)
1. Miguel Callist (PAN)
2. Julien Lorcy (FRA)
3. Lakva Sim (MON)
4. Juan Lazcano (USA)
5. Steve Johnston (USA)
6. Phillip Ndou (SA)
7. Juan Gomez-Trinidad (PR)
8. Prawet Singwangcha (THAI)
9. Angel Manfredy (USA)
10. Diego Corrales (USA)
11. Orlando Salido (MEX)
12. Steve Quinonez (USA)

SUPER FEATHERWEIGHTS
Unified Champ: Acelino Freitas (BRA)
Champ: Yodsanan Nanthachai (THAI)
1. Joel Casamayor (CUB)
2. Jorge Barrios (ARG)
3. Daniel Attah (NIG)
4. Julio Pablo Chacon (ARG)
5. Javier Jauregui (MEX)
6. Jesus Chavez (MEX)
7. Randy Suico (PHIL)
8. Nobuhito Honmo (JAP)
9. Nate Campbell (USA)
10. Cassius Baloyi (SA)
11. Alex Arthur (GB)
12. Mike Anchondo (USA)

FEATHERWEIGHTS
Champ: Derrick Gainer (USA)
1. Marco Antonio Barrera (MEX)
2. Daniel Seda (PR)
3. Naseem Hamed (GB)
4. Injin Chi (KOR)
5. Antonio Cermeno (VEN)
6. Chris John (IND)
7. Takashi Koshimoto (JAP)
8. Michael Brodie (GB)
9. Spend Abazi (DEN)
10. Victor Polo (COL)
11. William Abelyan (ARM)
12. Zahir Raheem (USA)

SUPER BANTAMWEIGHTS
Champ: Salim Medjkoune (FRA)
1. Vacant
2. Yoddamrong Sithyodthong (THAI)
3. Somsak Sithchachawan (THAI)
4. Kozo Ishii (JAP)
5. Osamu Sato (JAP)
6. Yober Ortega (VEN)
7. Jose Rojas (VEN)
8. Paulie Ayala (USA)
9. Nadel Hussein (AUSTRL)
10. Johnny Armour (GB)
11. Napapol Kiattisachokchai (THAI)
12. Mahyar Monshipour (FRA)

BANTAMWEIGHTS
Champ: Johnny Bredahl (DEN)
1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. Tim Austin (USA)
4. Yokthai Sithoar (THAI)
5. Hideki Todaka (JAP)
6. Leo Gamez (VEN)
7. Joichiro Tatsuyoshi (JAP)
8. Poongsawat Krachingdaen (THAI)
9. Diego Morales (MEX)
10. Nobuaki Naka (JAP)
11. Toshiaki Nishioka (JAP)
12. Moises Castro (NIC)

SUPER FLYWEIGHTS
Champ: Alexander Munoz (VEN)
1. Vacant
2. Sompichai Pisnurachank (THAI)
3. Katsushige Kawashima (JAP)
4. Rogelio Galicia (PHIL)
5. Kohei Matsuura (JAP)
6. Luis Bolano (COL)
7. Jose Navarro (USA)
8. Saen Sor Ploenchit (THAI)
9. Hideyasu Ishihara (JAP)
10. Mauricio Pastrana (COL)
11. Gabula Vabaza (SA)
12. Martin Castillo (MEX)

FLYWEIGHTS
Champ: Eric Morel (USA)
1. Lorenzo Parra (VEN)
2. Takefumi Sakata (JAP)
3. Hussein Hussein (AUSTRL)
4. Denkaosaen Kaowitch (THAI)
5. Damaen Kelly (GB)
6. Brahim Asloum (FRA)
7. Mzukisi Sikali (SA)
8. Isidro Garcia (MEX)
9. Tomas Rojas (MEX)
10. Alexander Mahmutov (RUS)
11. Hidenobu Honda (JAP)
12. Brian Viloria (USA)

LIGHT FLYWEIGHTS
Champ: Rosendo Alvarez (NIC)
1. Vacant
2. Melchor Cob Castro (MEX)
3. Bebis Mendoza (COL)
4. Pichit C. Siriwat (THAI)
5. Edgar Velasquez (VEN)
6. Marvin Tampos (PHIL)
7. Eric Ortiz (MEX)
8. Mhikiza Myekeni (SA)
9. Rodel Mayol (PHIL)
10. Tatsuo Kayashida (JAP)
11. Alex Sanchez (PR)
12. Wendyl Janiola (PHIL)

MINIMUMWEIGHTS
Champ: Noel Arambulet (VEN)
1. Chana Porpaoin (THAI)
2. Joma Gamboa (PHIL)
3. Daniel Reyes (COL)
4. Khulile Makeba (SA)
5. Keitaro Hoshino (JAP)
6. Jaewon Kim (KOR)
7. Yutaka Niida (JAP)
8. Genki Ohnaka (JAP)
9. Eriberto Gijon (PHIL)
10. Pornsawan Pramuk (THAI)
11. Roberto Leyva (MEX)
12. Isaac Bustos (MEX)

WBC RATINGS
(Ratings as of April 2003)

HEAVYWEIGHTS
Champ: Lennox Lewis (GB)
1. Vitali Klitschko (UKR)
2. Hasim Rahman (USA)
3. Mike Tyson (USA)
4. Evander Holyfield (USA)
5. David Tua (NZ)
6. Lamon Brewster (USA)
7. John Ruiz (USA)
8. Kirk Johnson (CAN)
9. Sinan Samil San (TUR)
10. Fres Oquendo (USA)
11. Wladimir Klitschko (UKR)
12. Juan Carlos Gomez (CUB)
13. Michael Grant (USA)
14. Joe Mesi (USA)
15. Danny Williams (GB)
16. Jameel McCline (USA)
17. Lou Savarese (USA)
18. Faruq Saleem (USA)
19. Jeremy Williams (USA)
20. Lance Whitaker (USA)
21. Frans Botha (SA)
22. Larry Donald (USA)
23. Brian Nielsen (DEN)
24. Andre Purlette (GUY)
25. Dimitry Bakhtov (KAZ)
26. Clifford Etienne (USA)
27. DaVarryl Williamson (USA)
28. Timo Hoffman (GB)
29. Cedric Boswell (USA)
30. Jean Francois Bergeron (CAN)

CRUISERWEIGHTS
Champ: Wayne Braithwaite (GUY)
1. O'Neil Bell (USA)
2. Vincenzo Cantatore (ITA)
3. Louis Azille (DR)
4. Vassiliy Jirov (KAZ)
5. Sebastiaan Rothmann (SA)
6. Pietro Aurino (ITA)
7. Luis Andres Pineda (PAN)
8. Alexander Petkovic (GER)
9. Rudiger May (GER)
10. Richard LaMontagne (USA)
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17. Glen Kelly (AUSTRL)
18. Fabrice Tiozzo (FRA)
19. Turan Bagci (TUR)
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27. Daniel Rowsell (AUSTRL)
28. Mohamed Ben Guesmia (ALG)
29. Vincenzo Rossitto (ITA)
30. Grigory Drozd (RUS)

LT. HEAVYWEIGHTS
Champ: Antonio Tarver (USA)
1. Clinton Woods (GB)
2. Paul Briggs (AUSTRL)
3. Thomas Ulrich (GER)
4. Julio Gonzalez (USA)
5. Montell Griffin (USA)
6. Eric Harding (USA)
7. Stipe Drews (CRO)
8. Jorge Castro (ARG)
9. Tomasz Adamek (POL)
10. Kamel Amrane (FRA)
11. Elvir Muriqi (ALB)
12. George Jones (USA)
13. Orlando Rivera (PR)
14. Darren Corbett (IRE)
15. Derrick Harmon (USA)
16. Robert Stieglitz (GER)
17. Tony Oakey (GB)
18. Laudelino Barros (BRA)
19. Elvis Michailenko (LAT)
20. Madjid Zaim (FRA)
21. Alejandro Lakatus (ROM)
22. Silvio Branco (ITA)
23. Rodney Moore (USA)
24. Zsolt Erdei (HUN)
25. Rodney Toney (USA)
26. Michael Rush (USA)
27. Ron Simms (USA)
28. Adrian Diaconu (CAN)
29. Donnell Wiggins (USA)
30. Jackson Chanet (FRA)

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Champ: Markus Beyer (GER)
1. Eric Lucas (CAN)
2. Mikkel Kessler (DEN)
3. Danilo Haussler (GER)
4. Antwun Echols (USA)
5. Mads Larsen (DEN)
6. Syd Vanderpool (CAN)
7. Yoshinori Nishizawa (JAP)
8. Andre Thysse (SA)
9. Omar Sheika (USA)
10. Charles Brewer (USA)
11. Henry Porras (CR)
12. David Starie (GB)
13. Zafarou Ballogou (TOGO)
14. Glenn Catley (GB)
15. Byron Mitchell (USA)
16. Oscar Bravo (USA)
17. Danny Green (AUSTRL)
18. Anthony Mundine (AUSTRL)
19. Dan Batchelder (USA)
20. Jeff Lacy (USA)
21. Rudy Markussen (DEN)
22. Mario Veit (GER)
23. Robin Reid (GB)
24. Brian Magee (GB)
25. Kabary Salem (EGY)
26. James Lubwana (UGA)
27. Jean Paul Mendy (FRA)
28. Enrique Ornelas (USA)
29. Victor Oganov (RUS)
30. Charles Adamu (GHA)

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Champ: Bernard Hopkins (USA)
1. Howard Eastman (GB)
2. Cristian Sanavia (ITA)
3. Robert Allen (USA)
4. Kuvanych Toygonbayev (UZB)
5. Nader Hamdan (AUSTRL)
6. Wayne Alexander (GB)
7. Eric Mitchell (USA)
8. Aslan Kodzoev (RUS)
9. Evans Ashira (KEN)
10. Raymond Joval (HOL)
11. Erland Betare (FRA)
12. Quentin Smith (USA)
13. Morrade Hakkar (FRA)
14. Tito Mendoza (PAN)
15. Hassine Cherifi (FRA)
16. Sergey Tatevosyan (RUS)
17. Tokutaro Toyozumi (JAP)
18. Jerry Elliott (NIG)
19. Jermain Taylor (USA)
20. Jorge Sendra (SPA)
21. Andras Galfi (HUN)
22. Carl Daniels (USA)
23. Alejandro Berrio (COL)
24. Satoru Suzuki (JAP)
25. Ruben Williams (USA)
26. James Obedi Toney (GHA)
27. Marcos Silvano Diaz (ARG)
28. Anthony Bonsante (USA)
29. Kingsley Ikeke (CAN)
30. Bert Schenk (GER)

SUPER WELTERWEIGHTS
Champ: Oscar De La Hoya (USA)
Interim Champ: Javier Castillejo (SPA)
1. Fitz Vanderpool (CAN)
2. Shane Mosley (USA)
3. Roman Karmazin (RUS)
4. Kassim Ouma (USA)
5. Akira Ohigashi (JAP)
6. Michael Rask (DEN)
7. Richard Williams (GB)
8. Alex Bunema (USA)
9. Mihaly Kotai (HUN)
10. Christophe Canclaux (FRA)
11. Rhoshii Wells (USA)
12. Raul Marquez (USA)
13. Julio Garcia (CUB)
14. J.C. Candelo (COL)
15. Diego Castillo (COL)
16. Sergei Dzindziruk (UKR)
17. Angel Hernandez (MEX)
18. Travis Simms (USA)
19. Shawn Garnett (USA)
20. Yory Boy Campas (MEX)
21. Rodney Jones (USA)
22. Carlos Bojorquez (USA)
23. Marco Antonio Rubio (MEX)
24. Joachim Alcine (CAN)
25. Michael Lerma (USA)
26. Steve Roberts (GB)
27. Anderson Clayton (BRA)
28. Verno Phillips (USA)
29. Jamie Moore (GB)
30. Emmett Linton (USA)

WELTERWEIGHTS
Champ: Ricardo Mayorga (NIC)
1. Vernon Forrest (USA)
2. Thomas Damgaard (DEN)
3. Carlos Baldomir (ARG)
4. Alexander Vetoux (UKR)
5. Hiroshi Watanabe (JAP)
6. Manuel Gomez (MEX)
7. Rafael Pineda (COL)
8. Michel Trabant (GER)
9. Miguel Rodriguez (MEX)
10. Teddy Reid (USA)
11. Jawaid Khaliq (GB)
12. Michele Orlando (ITA)
13. Paolo Roberto (SWE)
14. Christian Bladt (DEN)
15. Rev Santillan (PHIL)
16. James Hare (GB)
17. Michele Piccirillo (ITA)
18. Alpaslam Aguzum (TUR)
19. Joseph Makaringe (SA)
20. Jose Luis Cruz (MEX)
21. Neil Sinclair (GB)
22. Carlos Quintana (PR)
23. Kermit Cintron (USA)
24. Sergio Martinez (ARG)
25. Eduardo Bejarano (ARG)
26. Riad Menasria (ALG)
27. Chris Smith (USA)
28. Christopher Henry (BAR)
29. Freddy Hernandez (MEX)
30. Anthony Thompson (USA)

SUPER LIGHTWEIGHTS
Champ: Kostya Tszyu (AUSTRL)
1. Gianluca Branco (ITA)
2. Ricky Hatton (GB)
3. Arturo Gatti (CAN)
4. Oktay Urkal (TUR)
5. Sharmba Mitchell (USA)
6. Zab Judah (USA)
7. Omar Weis (ARG)
8. Miguel Cotto (PR)
9. Masakazu Satake (JAP)
10. Micky Ward (USA)
11. Jason Cook (GB)
12. James Leija (USA)
13. Hector Camacho Jr. (PR)
14. Eamonn Magee (GB)
15. Francisco Bojado (MEX)
16. Kelson Pinto (BRA)
17. Muhammad Abdullaev (UZB)

18. Juan Valenzuela (MEX)
19. Terrance Cauthen (USA)
20. Junior Witter (GB)
21. Ricardo Williams (USA)
22. Diobelys Hurtado (CUB)
23. Soulemane M'Baye (FRA)
24. Cesar Bazan (MEX)
25. Cosme Rivera (MEX)
26. Ener Julio (COL)
27. Ricky Quiles (USA)
28. Mikhail Krivolapov (RUS)
29. Carlos Mairena (NIC)
30. Ted Bami (GB)

LIGHTWEIGHTS
Champ: Floyd Mayweather (USA)
1. Juan Lazcano (USA)
2. Steve Johnston (USA)
3. Jose Luis Castillo (MEX)
4. Julien Lorcy (FRA)
5. Kengo Nagashima (JAP)
6. Juan Diaz (MEX)
7. David Burke (GB)
8. Dennis Laurente (PHIL)
9. Victoriano Damian Sosa (DR)
10. Julio Diaz (USA)
11. Yuri Romanov (UKR)
12. Aldo Rios (ARG)
13. Bobby Vanzie (GB)
14. Michael Clark (USA)
15. Juan Gomez Trinidad (PR)
16. Colin Dunne (GB)
17. Steve Quinonez (USA)
18. Alex Trujillo (PR)
19. Leavander Johnson (USA)
20. Eleazar Contreras (USA)
21. Cristian Bejarano (MEX)
22. Lamar Murphy (USA)
23. Steve Forbes (USA)
24. Carlos Gerena (PR)
25. Miguel Callist (PAN)
26. Mat Zegan (POL)
27. Sayan Sanchat (RUS)
28. Ricardo Silva (ARG)
29. Efren Hinojosa (MEX)
30. Michele Delli Paoli (ITA)

SUPER FEATHERWEIGHTS
Champ: Sirimongkol Singmanassuk (THAI)
1. Jesus Chavez (USA)
2. Philip Ndou (SA)
3. Randy Suico (PHIL)
4. Joel Casamayor (CUB)
5. Mzonke Fana (SA)
6. Daniel Attah (NIG)
7. Affif Djelti (FRA)
8. Nate Campbell (USA)
9. Nobuto Honmo (JAP)
10. Julio Pablo Chacon (ARG)
11. Diego Corrales (USA)
12. Jorge Barrios (ARG)
13. Fernando Trejo (MEX)
14. Ryuhei Sugita (JAP)
15. Miguel Angel Huerta (MEX)
16. Mike Anchondo (USA)
17. Humberto Soto (MEX)
18. Goyo Vargas (MEX)
19. Javier Jauregui (MEX)
20. Robbie Peden (AUSTRL)
21. Orlando Salido (MEX)
22. Boris Sinitsin (RUS)
23. Yongsoo Choi (KOR)
24. Pedro Miranda (SPA)
25. Craig Docherty (GB)
26. Daniel Alicea (PR)
27. Alex Arthur (GB)
28. Wilfredo Vazquez (PR)
29. Steve Luevano (USA)
30. Silverio Ortiz (MEX)

FEATHERWEIGHTS
Champ: Erik Morales (MEX)
1. Injin Chi (KOR)
2. Michael Brodie (GB)
3. Takashi Koshimoto (JAP)
4. William Abelyan (USA)
5. Manuel Calvo (SPA)
6. Luis Fuentes (MEX)
7. Spend Abazi (DEN)
8. Takalani Noluvo (SA)
9. Guty Espadas (MEX)
10. Naseem Hamed (GB)
11. Zahir Raheem (USA)
12. Rocky Juarez (USA)
13. Cyril Thomas (FRA)
14. Juan Gerardo Cabrera (ARG)
15. Yangsoo Sung (KOR)
16. Angel Chacon (PR)
17. Hector Velazquez (MEX)
18. Wayne McCullough (IRE)
19. Fernando Velardez (MEX)
20. Hector Marquez (MEX)
21. George Priest Smalls (USA)
22. Valdemir Pereira (BRA)
23. Frankie Toledo (USA)
24. Dainoshin Kuma (JAP)
25. Oscar Leon (COL)
26. David Murillo (MEX)
27. Choi Tseveenpurev (MON)
28. Gavin Rees (GB)
29. Ruben Estanislao (MEX)
30. Ray Beltran (MEX)

SUPER BANTAMWEIGHTS
Champ: Oscar Larios (MEX)
1. Kiattisak Chocchoi (THAI)
2. Nadel Hussein (AUSTRL)
3. Israel Vazquez (MEX)
4. Paulie Ayala (USA)
5. Shigeru Nakazato (JAP)
6. Osamu Sato (JAP)
7. Kozo Ishii (JAP)
8. Willie Jorrin (USA)
9. Junichi Watanabe (JAP)
10. Manabu Fukushima (JAP)
11. Akihiro Kanai (JAP)
12. Mahyar Monshipour (FRA)
13. Emmanuel Lucero (USA)
14. Celestino Caballero (PAN)
15. David Donis (USA)
16. Lehlo Ledwaba (SA)
17. Marcos Licona (MEX)
18. Hector Julio Avila (DR)
19. Jose Rojas (VEN)
20. Jilrex Laca (PHIL)
21. Art Simonyan (USA)
22. Masakazu Sugawara (JAP)
23. Jose Luis Valbuena (VEN)
24. Youngjin Cho (KOR)
25. Vincenzo Gigliotti (ITA)
26. Fernando Beltran Jr. (MEX)
27. Pastor Maurin (ARG)
28. Alejandro Barrera (MEX)
29. Martin Honorio (MEX)
30. Andres Cabrera (MEX)

BANTAMWEIGHTS
Champ: Veerapol Sahaprom (THAI)
1. Toshiaki Nishioka (JAP)
2. Diego Morales (MEX)
3. Genaro Garcia (USA)
4. Noel Wilders (GB)
5. Jess Maca (PHIL)
6. David Guerault (FRA)
7. Ricardo Vargas (MEX)
8. Julio Zarate (MEX)
9. Joichiro Tatsuyoshi (JAP)
10. Jhonny Gonzalez (MEX)
11. Tim Austin (USA)
12. Gerardo Martinez (MEX)
13. Jesus Perez (COL)
14. Hugo Dianzo (MEX)
15. Daniel Ponce (MEX)
16. Hideki Todaka (JAP)
17. Julio Gamboa (NIC)
18. Moises Castro (NIC)
19. Heriberto Ruiz (MEX)
20. Sasha Baktin (RUS)
21. Steve Molitor (CAN)
22. Jorge Lacierva (MEX)
23. Rogelio Galicia (PHIL)
24. Julio Cesar Avila (MEX)
25. Miguel Angel Munguia (MEX)
26. Nobuaki Naka (JAP)
27. Eidy Moya (VEN)
28. Hozumi Hasegawa (JAP)
29. Silence Mabuza (SA)
30. Nicky Booth (GB)

SUPER FLYWEIGHTS
Champ: Masamori Tokuyama (JAP)
1. Dimitri Kirilov (RUS)
2. Reynaldo Hurtado (COL)
3. Luis Bolano (COL)
4. Malcolm Tunacao (PHIL)
5. Katsushige Kawashima (JAP)
6. Mauricio Pastrana (COL)
7. Medgoen Singsurat (THAI)
8. Jose Beranza (MEX)
9. Hideyasu Ishihara (JAP)
10. Martin Castillo (MEX)
11. Peter Culshaw (GB)
12. Jose Navarro (USA)
13. Saen Sor Ploenchit (THAI)
14. Felix Machado (VEN)
15. Masaki Kawabata (JAP)
16. Oscar Andrade (MEX)
17. Masayuki Arinaga (JAP)
18. Ricardo Cordoba (PAN)
19. Shin Ogata (JAP)
20. Karim Quibir (SPA)
21. Erick Lopez (MEX)
22. Valerio Sanchez (MEX)
23. Lunga Ntontela (SA)
24. Simphewe Khandisa (SA)
25. Cuauhtemoc Vargas (MEX)
26. Waenpetch Chuwatana (THAI)
27. Neddy Garcia (USA)
28. Eduardo Pacheco (COL)
29. Rolando Gerongco (PHIL)
30. Cesar Lopez (USA)

FLYWEIGHTS
Champ: Pongsaklek Wonjongkam (THAI)
1. Hussein Hussein (AUSTRL)
2. Hiroshi Nakano (JAP)
3. Hidenobu Honda (JAP)
4. Luis Maldonado (MEX)
5. Takefumi Sakata (JAP)
6. Brian Viloria (USA)
7. Noriyuki Komatsu (JAP)
8. Damaen Kelly (GB)
9. Tomas Rojas (MEX)
10. Randy Mangubat (PHIL)
11. Mzukisi Sikali (SA)
12. Masaki Nakamuna (JAP)
13. Jair Jimenez (COL)
14. Alexander Mahmutov (RUS)
15. Lorenzo Parra (VEN)
16. Koji Koyama (JAP)
17. Steffen Norskov (DEN)
18. Mimoun Chent (FRA)
19. Brahim Asloum (FRA)
20. Wandee Chor Chareon (THAI)
21. Daisuke Naito (JAP)
22. Hayato Asai (JAP)
23. Yusuke Morishima (JAP)
24. Ramses Patterson (USA)
25. Ivan Hernandez (MEX)
26. Carlos Bouchan (MEX)
27. Jose Araiza (MEX)
28. Jose Lopez Bueno (SPA)
29. Jason Booth (GB)
30. Glenn Donaire (PHIL)

LIGHT FLYWEIGHTS
Champ: Jorge Arce (MEX)
1. Juanito Rubillar (PHIL)
2. Melchor Cob Castro (MEX)
3. Yosam Choi (KOR)
4. Eric Ortiz (MEX)
5. Tatsuo Hayashida (JAP)
6. Manuel Vargas (MEX)
7. Roberto Vazquez (PAN)
8. Edgar Cardenas (MEX)
9. Monelisi Myekeni (SA)
10. Jaewon Kim (KOR)
11. Masato Hatakeyama (JAP)
12. Marvin Tampos (PHIL)
13. Jesus Martinez (MEX)
14. Joma Gamboa (PHIL)
15. Armand De La Cruz (PHIL)
16. Rafael Lozano (SPA)
17. Shingo Yamaguchi (JAP)
18. Agustin Luna (MEX)
19. Bebis Mendoza (COL)
20. Sarikalek O. Eakarin (THAI)
21. Hugo Cazares (MEX)
22. Nerys Espinoza (NIC)
23. Wendyl Janiola (PHIL)
24. Andrea Sarritzu (ITA)
25. Juan Centeno (NIC)
26. Ernesto Castro (NIC)
27. Rodrigo Garcia (MEX)
28. Steve Msimango (SA)
29. Jun Kitano (JAP)
30. Carlos Fajardo (NIC)

STRAWWEIGHTS
Champ: Jose Antonio Aguirre (MEX)
1. Khulile Makeba (SA)
2. Isaac Bustos (MEX)
3. Eagle Okuda (JAP)
4. Heriberto Gijon (PHIL)
5. Rodel Mayol (PHIL)
6. Satoshi Kogumasaka (JAP)
7. Genki Ohnaka (JAP)
8. Mohamed Rachman (INDO)
9. Keitaro Hoshino (JAP)
10. Hiroyuki Abe (JAP)
11. Juan Palacios (NIC)
12. Noel Tunacao (PHIL)
13. Oledong Sithsanerchai (THAI)
14. Ernesto Rubillar (PHIL)
15. Hiroshi Nakajima (JAP)
16. Chana Porpaoin (THAI)
17. Ki-Moon Na (KOR)
18. Yutaka Niida (JAP)
19. Ulises Solis (MEX)
20. Eduardo Marquez (NIC)
21. Hiroshi Matsumoto (JAP)
22. Juan Alfonso Keb Baas (MEX)
23. Makoto Suzuki (JAP)
24. Sizwe Sinyabi (SA)
25. Manasak Yootthakit (THAI)
26. Omar Soto (MEX)
27. Namchai Ratanachaigym (THAI)
28. Pornsawan Porpramook (THAI)
29. Teruo Misawa (JAP)
30. Juan Landaeta (VEN)

IBF RATINGS
(Ratings as of May 2003)

HEAVYWEIGHTS
Champ: Chris Byrd (USA)
1. Vacant
2. Fres Oquendo (USA)
3. David Tua (NZ)
4. Hasim Rahman (USA)
5. Vitali Klitschko (UKR)
6. John Ruiz (USA)
7. Evander Holyfield (USA)
8. Kirk Johnson (CAN)
9. Mike Tyson (USA)
10. Wladimir Klitschko (UKR)
11. Lamon Brewster (USA)
12. Clifford Etienne (USA)

CRUISERWEIGHTS
Champ: James Toney (USA)
1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. O'Neil Bell (USA)
4. Virgil Hill (USA)
5. Vassiliy Jirov (KAZ)
6. Kelvin Davis (USA)
7. Vincenzo Cantatore (ITA)
8. Ezra Sellers (USA)
9. Alexander Gurov (UKR)
10. Dale Brown (CAN)
11. Jason Robinson (USA)
12. Louis Azille (USA)

LT. HEAVYWEIGHTS
Champ: Antonio Tarver (USA)
1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. Julio Gonzalez (USA)
4. Paul Briggs (AUSTRL)
5. Thomas Ulrich (GER)
6. Eric Harding (USA)
7. Montell Griffin (USA)
8. Clinton Woods (GB)
9. George Jones (USA)
10. Jorge Castro (ARG)
11. Derrick Harmon (USA)
12. Stipe Drews (CRO)

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Champ: Sven Ottke (GER)
1. Antwun Echols (USA)
2. Danilo Haussler (GER)
3. Mads Larsen (DEN)
4. Charles Brewer (USA)
5. Mikkel Kessler (DEN)
6. Byron Mitchell (USA)
7. Syd Vanderpool (CAN)
8. Mario Veit (GER)
9. Andre Thysse (SA)
10. Danny Green (AUSTRL)
11. Glenn Catley (GB)
12. David Starie (ENG)

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Champ: Bernard Hopkins (USA)
1. Robert Allen (USA)
2. Vacant
3. Howard Eastman (GB)
4. Raymond Joval (HOL)
5. Carl Daniels (USA)
6. Bert Schenk (GER)
7. Tito Mendoza (PAN)
8. Cristian Sanavia (ITA)
9. Evans Ashira (GUY)
10. Bea Diallo (LIB)
11. Erland Betare (FRA)
12. Julio Garcia (USA)

JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Champ: Winky Wright (USA)
1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. J.C. Candelo (USA)
4. Shane Mosley (USA)
5. Emmett Linton (USA)
6. Verno Phillips (USA)
7. Angel Hernandez (USA)
8. Alex Bunema (USA)
9. Kassim Ouma (USA)
10. Michael Rask (DEN)
11. Bronco McKart (USA)
12. Rhoshii Wells (USA)

WELTERWEIGHTS
Champ: Cory Spinks (USA)
1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. Thomas Damgaard (DEN)
4. Vernon Forrest (USA)
5. Michele Piccirillo (ITA)
6. James Hare (ENG)
7. Rafael Pineda (COL)
8. Jose Rivera (USA)
9. Jose Celaya (USA)
10. Michele Trabant (GER)
11. Hector Quiroz (USA)
12. Christian Bladt (DEN)

JR. WELTERWEIGHTS
Champ: Kostya Tszyu (AUSTRL)
1. Vacant
2. Sharmba Mitchell (USA)
3. Oktay Urkal (TUR)
4. Zab Judah (USA)
5. Omar Weis (ARG)
6. Arturo Gatti (USA)
7. Micky Ward (USA)
8. Emanuel Augustus (USA)
9. Ben Tackie (GHA)
10. Miguel Cotto (USA)
11. James Leija (USA)
12. Mike Stewart (USA)

LIGHTWEIGHTS
Champ: Paul Spadafora (USA)
1. Vacant
2. Leavander Johnson (USA)
3. Angel Manfredy (USA)
4. Javier Jauregui (MEX)
5. Juan Gomez Trinidad (PR)
6. Jose Luis Castillo (MEX)
7. Juan Lazcano (USA)
8. Steve Johnston (USA)
9. Julien Lorcy (FRA)
10. Julio Diaz (USA)
11. Steve Quinonez (USA)
12. Victoriano Sosa (DR)

JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS
Champ: Carlos Hernandez (USA)
1. Steve Forbes
2. Vacant
3. Joel Casamayor (USA)
4. Jorge Barrios (ARG)
5. Jesus Chavez (USA)
6. David Santos (USA)
7. Nate Campbell (USA)
8. Orlando Salido (MEX)
9. Phillip Ndou (SA)
10. Diego Corrales (USA)
11. Daniel Attah (USA)
12. Daniel Alicea (USA)

FEATHERWEIGHTS
Champ: Juan Manuel Marquez (MEX)
1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. Marco Antonio Barrera (MEX)
4. William Abelyan (USA)
5. Manuel Medina (MEX)
6. Oscar Leon (PR)
7. Michael Brodie (ENG)
8. In Jin Chi (KOR)
9. Victor Polo (COL)
10. Guty Espadas (USA)
11. Spend Abazi (DEN)
12. Zahir Raheem (USA)

JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS
Champ: Manny Pacquaio (PHIL)
1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. Jose Luis Valbuena (ARG)
4. Lehlo Ledwaba (SA)
5. Paulie Ayala (USA)
6. David Donis (USA)
7. Fernando Velardez (USA)
8. F. Rakkiatgym (THAI)
9. Nadel Hussein (AUSTRL)
10. Diego Morales (MEX)
11. Julio Gamboa (NIC)
12. Emmanuel Lucero (USA)

BANTAMWEIGHTS
Champ: Rafael Marquez (MEX)
1. Vacant
2. Tim Austin (USA)
3. Pete Frissina (USA)
4. Ricardo Vargas (MEX)
5. Jesus Perez (COL)
6. Roger Gonzalez (USA)
7. Genaro Garcia (MEX)
8. David Guerault (FRA)
9. Ratanachai Vorapin (THAI)
10. Jose Aguiniga (USA)
11. Fahsung 3K Battery (THAI)
12. Hugo Dianzo (MEX)

JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS
Champ: Luis Perez (NIC)
1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. Felix Machado (VEN)
4. Mauricio Pastrana (COL)
5. Luis Bolano (COL)
6. Martin Castillo (MEX)
7. Peter Culshaw (ENG)
8. Vernie Torres (USA)
9. Alexander Mahmutov (RUS)
10. Joichiro Tatsuyoshi (JAP)
11. Saen Sor Ploenchit (THAI)
12. Adonis Rivas (NIC)

FLYWEIGHTS
Champ: Irene Pacheco (COL)
1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. Hussein Hussein (LEB)
4. Damaen Kelly (GB)
5. Alejandro Montiel (MEX)
6. Vic Darchinian (AUSTRL)
7. Takefumi Sakata (JAP)
8. Kermin Guardia (COL)
9. Wandee Chareon (THAI)
10. Isidro Garcia (MEX)
11. Masaki Kawabata (JAP)
12. Randy Mangubat (PHIL)

JR. FLYWEIGHTS
Champ: Jose Burgos (MEX)
1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. Fahlan Sakreerin (THAI)
4. Alexander Sanchez (PR)
5. Eric Ortiz (MEX)
6. Shingo Yamaguchi (JAP)
7. Bebis Mendoza (COL)
8. Hidenobu Honda (JAP)
9. Wendyl Janiola (PHIL)
10. Tatsuo Hatashida (JAP)
11. Jair Jimenez (COL)
12. Dimitri Kirilov (RUS)

MINI FLYWEIGHTS
Champ: Miguel Barrera (MEX)
1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. Daniel Reyes (COL)
4. Muhammad Rachman (INDO)
5. Chana Porpaoin (THAI)
6. Ivan Calderon (PR)
7. Noel Tunacao (PHIL)
8. Hiroshi Matsumoto (JAP)
9. Ernesto Rubillar (PHIL)
10. Roberto Leyva (MEX)
11. Jaewon Kim (KOR)
12. Joma Gamboa (PHIL)

CLASSIC

From THE RING, January 1991

NIGEL BENN

Boxing's Baddest Bad Boy Plays By His Own Rules

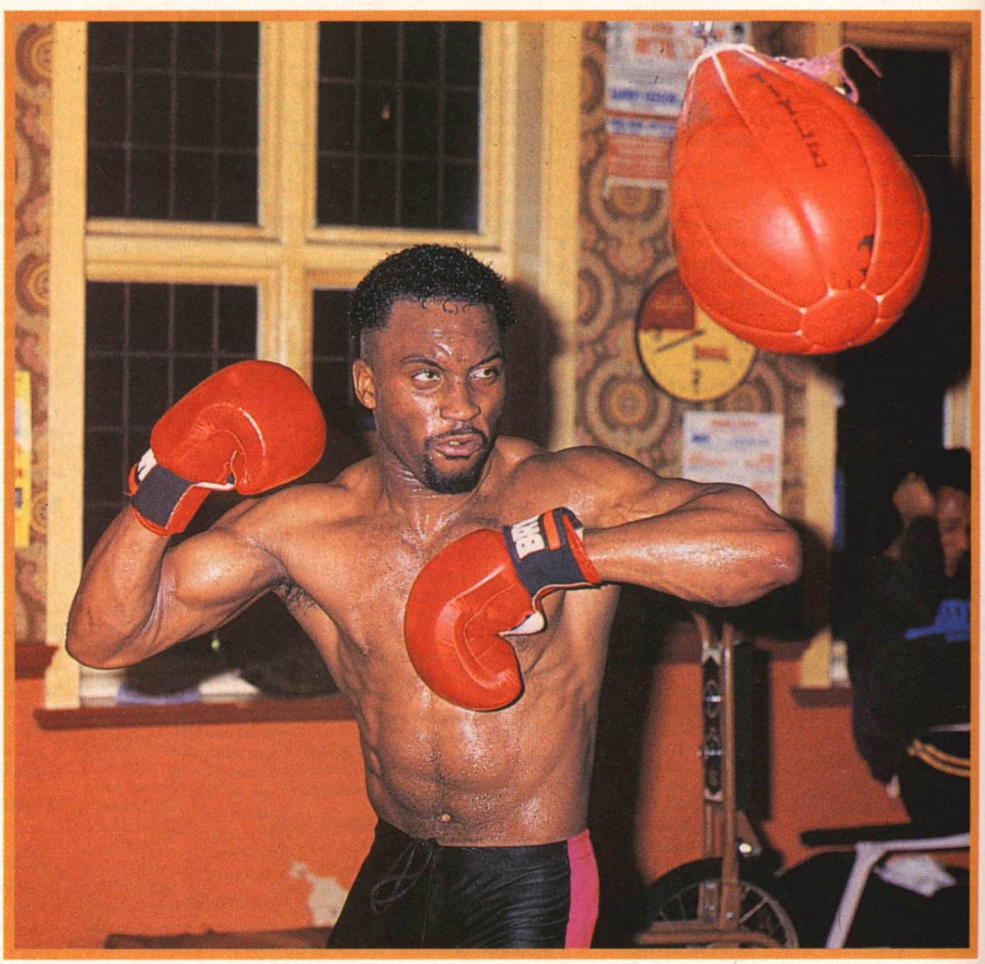
By Jeff Ryan

"The one thing men have not learned to do is stick up for their instinctive feeling, against the things that are taught."

—D.H. Lawrence

So Britons think that Nigel Benn is too flashy, huh? They've about had it with the glitter and the sequins and the robes that look like spacesuits designed by Giorgio of NASA? So what should he wear? Something more Bruno-esque, perhaps? Maybe all white, so he can be utterly unpretentious and satisfy the dress code of the staid Wimbledon folks at the same time? Well, after watching him fight, allow us to suggest something with real long sleeves, the better on which to wear his emotions. Perhaps he'd like to try on a pair of No Excuses jeans while he's at it, too.

"Why did I hit Barkley when he was down?"



asks Benn, his voice a blend of cockney and cocky. "Because he was trying to get up. That's the honest truth."

It is a September day in London, and England's native son, Benn, is reliving his controversial first-round kayo of Iran Barkley three weeks earlier. If there is one fight that serves as a microcosm for all that's right and wrong with Nigel Benn, all that makes him both boxing's most exciting fighter and its most likely candidate to commit career suicide, it was revealed in a three-minute psychological profile that Saturday afternoon in Las Vegas.

"The Dark Destroyer" attacked quickly, putting the former WBC titlist down with a right and left just 16 seconds into the action, and eventually forcing a stoppage via the three-knockdown rule. But along the way he got wobbled himself, and brazenly hit Barkley on the chin while "The Blade" was already on his hands and knees from the second knockdown. (Benn missed two punches he threw at a floored Barkley after the first knockdown, as well as a bomb fired while Barkley was attempting to rise. No, Benn was not trying out for a spot on *The American Gladiators*.)

"Hey, it was a war," Benn says coolly. "Barkley wasn't waving no white flag. He hit Thomas Hearns when Hearns was falling through the ropes. Look, this is a hard man's game, it ain't for pussycats. After the fight, Barkley's manager [John Reetz] was a complete jackass. He says, 'You hit him when he was on the floor.' We weren't in there for dancing."

Like all fighters, Nigel Benn was taught from the first time he walked through a gym door that when he starts to feel canvas, and not asphalt, under his feet, the game is played a whole lot differently. This is not the street, but the ring, a place that welcomes emotion as much as it does another in-depth study by the American Medical Association.

You're scared? You stare the other guy down to hide it. You're sad and demoralized? You commandeer the nearest live microphone and shout, "I want a rematch." You're angry? Never ever be angry. Fighting mad can get you hurt. That emotion, that fury, that raw passion that gets you over on a corner marked by some street gang's graffiti can get you killed in a corner marked by a Budweiser turnbuckle.

It's a message the 26-year-old Benn has chosen to ignore through 28 pro bouts, 27 of them victories, and 25 of those coming by kayo. Benn is 160 pounds of unrestrained emotion, his body a blender that takes anger, hate, and destruction, uses two whirling fists to mix them together, and creates a concoction that almost always leaves the opponent in a drunken stupor.

Benn's dramatic first-round stoppage of Iran Barkley served as a perfect example of the Briton's style, revealing a psychological profile of one of the most exciting fighters of the early-1990s.

Benn is bulging muscles, relentless pressure, and crippling power. He is punching angles that are geometrically impossible, right crosses launched from the mezzanine, and uppercut *leads*. He is a warrior with no defense and chin, but an unquenchable thirst for the toe-to-toe exchange.

He ran at Anthony Logan like a maniac when the opening bell sounded in their 1988 clash at London's Royal Albert Hall, and was quickly driven to the floor by a short right hand. Undaunted, he got up and kept charging. In round two, Benn absorbed (by his count) 22 unanswered punches, and was sent teetering helplessly across the ring. But then, with the fight seconds away from being stopped, he reached to what seemed like somewhere beneath the ring for a left hook, brought it up in a swing of complete desperation, and connected with Logan's jaw. Fight over. *Pheew!*

"I let emotion take over," said Benn.

Never before had Benn's temperament come so close to costing him, but he didn't care. Before the fight, Logan had said Benn was "garbage." Benn would show him what garbage was. Jabbing and feinting, waiting for openings, winning with controlled aggression, now *that's* garbage. Engage Benn in an undisciplined gunfight, however, and he'll second that emotion.

"We're not talking about a great fighter in terms of talent," says NBCs blow-by-blow announcer Marv Albert. "But his fights are always fun. There's always a blazing start, and he's always wide-open and flailing away."

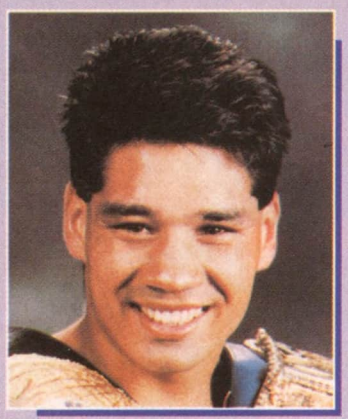
Though Benn is incredibly emotional, one who encounters him for the first time finds an intelligent, well-spoken, fun-loving father of three. He's funny and incredibly self-assured. But most of all, he is the kind of guy who prefers to set his own rules, not abide by somebody else's, be that a trainer, a referee, or even the FCC. After bombing Iran, Benn told interviewer Alex Wallau and his ABC audience, "I wanted to show that us Brits ain't a bunch of pussies. We come to fight!"

The British fighter, as Benn is well aware, has a bit of an image problem in the United States these days. American TV viewers tune in hoping to see the type of gallant soldier who stormed through the Falkland Islands, and instead, they usually see some guy who's about as aggressive as a gardener tiptoeing across the green grass of the All-England Tennis Club.

"The reputation comes," says Benn, "because too many of us always end up horizontal."

If only the British fighters were half as tough as their fans. The fans bring glass projectiles to the fights, and the guys they come

THE RING RATINGS, January 1991



Paul Banke

HEAVYWEIGHTS
1. **Buster Douglas,** Columbus, OH
2. **Mike Tyson,** Catskill, NY
3. **Evander Holyfield,** Atlanta, GA
4. **Razor Ruddock,** Canada
5. **Tim Witherspoon,** Philadelphia, PA
6. **Carl Williams,** White Plains, NY
7. **Francesco Damiani,** Italy
8. **Ray Mercer,** Union, NJ
9. **Alex Stewart,** Brooklyn, NY
10. **Riddick Bowe,** Brooklyn, NY

CRUISERWEIGHTS
1. **Jeff Lampkin,** Youngstown, OH
2. **Robert Daniels,** Miami, FL
3. **Taoufik Belbouli,** France
4. **Nate Miller,** Philadelphia, PA
5. **Anaclet Wamba,** France
6. **Massimiliano Duran,** Italy
7. **Mike Hunter,** Las Vegas, NV
8. **Carlos DeLeon,** Puerto Rico
9. **Johnny Nelson,** England
10. **Magne Havnaa,** Norway

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
1. **Virgil Hill,** Las Vegas, NV
2. **Prince Charles Williams,** Mansfield, OH
3. **Michael Moorer,** Detroit, MI
4. **Dennis Andries,** Detroit, MI
5. **Bobby Czyz,** Wanaque, NJ
6. **Jeff Harding,** Australia
7. **David Vedder,** San Jose, CA
8. **Booker T. Word,** Ypsilanti, MI
9. **Graciano Rocchigiani,** Germany
10. **Uriah Grant,** Miami, FL

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
1. **Sugar Ray Leonard,** Potomac, MD
2. **Thomas Hearns,** Las Vegas, NV
3. **Christophe Tiozzo,** France
4. **Lindell Holmes,** Detroit, MI
5. **Tony Byrd,** Los Angeles, CA
6. **Dario Matteoni,** Argentina
7. **Victor Cordova,** Panama
8. **John Jarvis,** Richmond, VA
9. **Juan Carlos Gimenez,** Paraguay
10. **Dan Morgan,** Minneapolis, MN

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
1. **Michael Nunn,** Los Angeles, CA
2. **Sumbu Kalambay,** Italy
3. **Mike McCallum,** Brooklyn, NY
4. **Nigel Benn,** England
5. **Roberto Duran,** Miami, FL
6. **Steve Collins,** Brockton, MA
7. **Herol Graham,** England
8. **Michael Watson,** England
9. **Donald Curry,** Fort Worth, TX
10. **Reggie Johnson,** Houston, TX

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS
1. **Julian Jackson,** Virgin Islands
2. **Gianfranco Rosi,** Italy
3. **Terry Norris,** Mission Valley, CA
4. **John Mugabi,** Tampa, FL
5. **John David Jackson,** Tucson, AZ
6. **Julio Cesar Vasquez,** Argentina
7. **Jorge Castro,** Argentina
8. **Darrin Van Horn,** Lexington, KY
9. **Chris Pyatt,** England
10. **Quincy Taylor,** Dallas, TX

WELTERWEIGHTS
1. **Simon Brown,** Germantown, MD
2. **Meldrick Taylor,** Philadelphia, PA
3. **Maurice Blocker,** Germantown, MD
4. **Buddy McGirt,** Brentwood, NY
5. **Aaron Davis,** Bronx, NY
6. **Mark Breland,** New York, NY
7. **Glenwood Brown,** Plainfield, NJ
8 **Tyrone Trice,** Detroit, MI
9. **Genaro Leon,** Mexico
10. **Kirkland Laing,** England

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS
1. **Julio Cesar Chavez,** Mexico
2. **Loreto Garza,** Sacramento, CA
3. **Roger Mayweather,** Las Vegas, NV
4. **Hector Camacho,** Big Cypress, FL
5. **Juan Coggi,** Argentina
6. **Louie Lomeli,** Melrose Park, IL
7. **Vinny Pazienza,** Cranston, RI
8. **John Meekins,** New York, NY
9. **Charles Murray,** Essex County, NJ
10. **Pat Barrett,** England

LIGHTWEIGHTS
1. **Pernell Whitaker,** Norfolk, VA
2. **Tracy Spann,** Plainfield, NJ
3. **Freddie Pendleton,** Miami, FL
4. **Juan Nazario,** Puerto Rico
5. **John Duplessis,** New Orleans, LA
6. **Poli Diaz,** Spain
7. **Anthony Jones,** Detroit, MI
8. **Pedro Sanchez,** New York, NY
9. **Greg Haugen,** Henderson, NV
10. **Darryl Tyson,** Washington, D.C.

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS
1. **Azumah Nelson,** Ghana
2. **Tony Lopez,** Sacramento, CA
3. **Brian Mitchell,** South Africa
4. **Jeff Fenech,** Australia
5. **John-John Molina,** Puerto Rico
6. **Genaro Hernandez,** Los Angeles, CA
7. **Bernard Taylor,** Knoxville, TN
8. **Juan LaPorte,** New York, NY
9. **Joey Gamache,** Lewiston, ME
10. **Frankie Mitchell,** Philadelphia, PA

FEATHERWEIGHTS
1. **Antonio Esparragoza,** Venezuela
2. **Jorge Paez,** Mexico
3. **Troy Dorsey,** Dallas, TX
4. **Louie Espinoza,** Phoenix, AZ
5. **Marcos Villasana,** Mexico
6. **Maurizio Stecca,** Italy
7. **Ricardo Cepeda,** Bronx, NY
8. **Eloy Rojas,** Venezuela
9. **Rafael Zuniga,** Colombia
10. **Paul Hodkinson,** England

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS
1. **Paul Banke,** Quail Valley, CA
2. **Jesse Benavides,** Corpus Christi, TX
3. **Daniel Zaragoza,** Mexico
4. **Welcome Ncita,** South Africa
5. **Jesus Salud,** San Diego, CA

to cheer bring glass jaws. Last year, British light heavyweight Tony Wilson had to rely on his mother to rescue him from a pounding by Steve McCarthy. Sixty-two-year-old Minna Wilson bolted past guards, climbed into the ring, and beat McCarthy bloody with her high-heeled shoe. (Maternal killer instinct?)

The two most beloved British fighters of all time are heavyweights Henry Cooper and Frank Bruno. Cooper is best known for photos that made him look like Sissy Spacek with a bucket of blood dumped on her head in the movie *Carrie*. Bruno is best remembered—like London Bridge—for falling down, falling

6. **Tracy Patterson,** New Paltz, NY
7. **Pedro Decima,** Argentina
8. **Jemal Hinton,** District Heights, MD
9. **Yong Hoon Lee,** South Korea
10. **Noree Jockygym,** Thailand

BANTAMWEIGHTS

1. **Raul Perez,** Mexico
2. **Orlando Canizales,** Laredo, TX
3. **Luisito Espinosa,** Philippines
4. **Israel Contreras,** Venezuela
5. **Pepillo Valdez,** Mexico
6. **Gerardo Martinez,** San Jose, CA
7. **Fernie Morales,** Mexico
8. **Kiyoshi Hatanaka,** Japan
9. **Billy Hardy,** England
10. **Greg Richardson,** Youngstown, OH

JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS

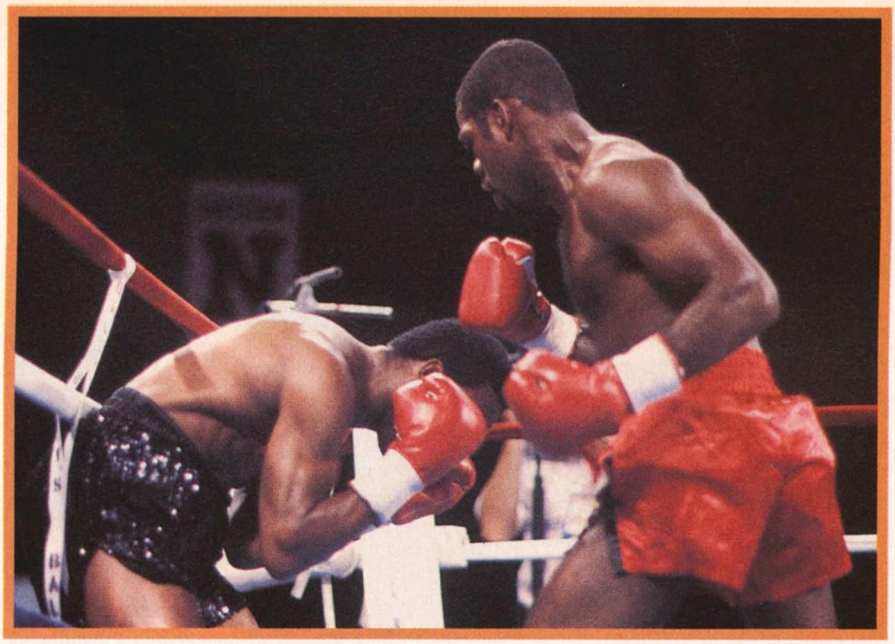
1. **Khaosai Galaxy,** Thailand
2. **Sung Kil Moon,** South Korea
3. **Nana Konadu,** Ghana
4. **Robert Quiroga,** San Antonio, TX
5. **Kid Akeem,** Las Vegas, NV
6. **Thanomsak Sithbaobey,** Thailand
7. **Jose Ruiz,** Puerto Rico
8. **Johnny Tapia,** Albuquerque, NM
9. **David Griman,** Venezuela
10. **Rey Paciones,** Philippines

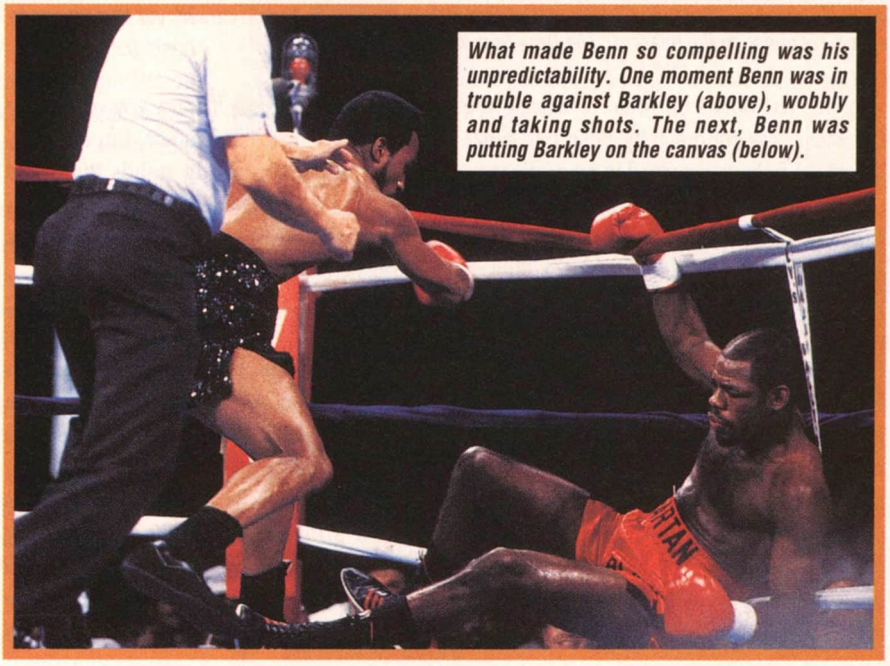
FLYWEIGHTS

1. **Sot Chitalada,** Thailand
2. **Dave McAuley,** Ireland
3. **Leopard Tamakuma,** Japan
4. **Jung Koo Chang,** South Korea
5. **Yul Woo Lee,** South Korea
6. **Jesus Rojas,** Venezuela
7. **Richard Clarke,** Jamaica
8. **Javier Lucas,** Mexico
9. **Romy Navarette,** Philippines
10. **Yong Kang Kim,** South Korea

POUND FOR POUND

1. **Julio Cesar Chavez,** Junior Welterweight
2. **Pernell Whitaker,** Lightweight
3. **Michael Nunn,** Middleweight
4. **Antonio Esparragoza,** Featherweight
5. **Meldrick Taylor,** Welterweight
6. **Buster Douglas,** Heavyweight
7. **Mike Tyson,** Heavyweight
8. **Raul Perez,** Bantamweight
9. **Humberto Gonzalez,** Light Flyweight
10. **Yuh Myung Woo,** Light Flyweight





What made Benn so compelling was his unpredictability. One moment Benn was in trouble against Barkley (above), wobbly and taking shots. The next, Benn was putting Barkley on the canvas (below).

down, falling down, in his case, against Bonecrusher Smith, Tim Witherspoon, and Mike Tyson.

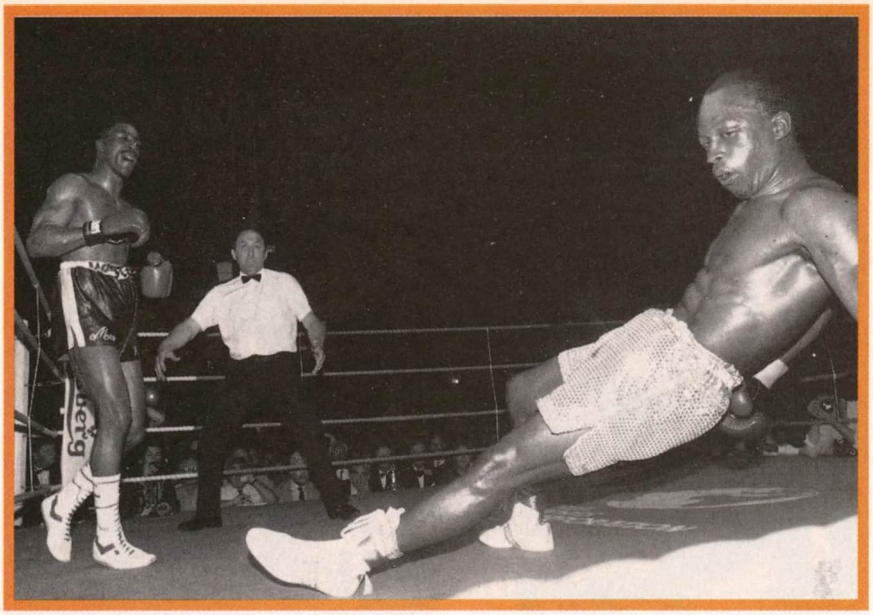
No, the image of the British fighter is not an appealing one, but it's one Benn himself did a lot to foster in his May 1989 bout with Michael Watson. Encountering an intelligent boxer who elected to play rope-a-dope rather than stand and trade, Benn spent five rounds pounding away futilely at Watson's elbows and gloves. Finally, in the sixth, an exhausted Benn was put down for the count with *a jab*. The perception of many ringsiders was that he simply quit.

"I'd never give up," Benn fires back. "I got up before 10, but the referee wasn't looking at me. I got frustrated in that fight. When you get frustrated, you get tired mentally. I never knew how to box. He was patient, and I was looking for a good, old-fashioned tear-up."

After the fight, Benn broke from British trainer Brian Lynch and hired Vic Andretti. It was a move, Benn says, that has provided him with renewed confidence, not to mention more productive sparring sessions.

"Before, if someone got in the ring with me, it was only to see how quickly I could put him on the floor," Benn says. "There was no footwork, no tactics, no learning how to avoid a jab."

To lose to Watson hung over Benn like London fog, but he took a step toward erasing it in an April 1990 shootout with Doug DeWitt, a veteran contender who fights too much like Benn for his own good. DeWitt, who had long been known for his ability to take a punch, and only three months earlier absorbed every one of Matthew Hilton's pul-



In a showdown of British middleweights, the cool, precise Michael Watson scored a sixth-round knockout of Benn. The Watson loss was only the first setback of Benn's career, yet it made many observers question the heart of "The Dark Destroyer."

verizing left hooks en route to halting the Canadian, was put down by Benn four times before the fight was stopped in round eight.

Ever the master of dramatic tension, Benn, of course, made the plot fairly unpredictable by toppling from a left hook himself in round two. Though Barkley was being totally dominated, and appeared to be punching underwater, he, too, managed to stun Benn, at one point driving him to the ropes. It is this apparent inability to absorb punishment that has Benn's critics predicting a short, albeit dazzling, stay at the top.

"Hey, I'm no pussyfoot merchant," Benn says, unfazed. "I want to be king of the tough guys. It doesn't matter if I go down to the floor. I'll get up. It's like someone putting a pin in your backside. It spurs you on. People say I'm a fighter, but I'm not. I'm an entertainer. When somebody stands there and trades, it's a gunfight. Like in those films of the Wild West. You just fire the bullets everywhere and pray that one hits.

"The way things are going today, M.C. Hammer could come into boxing. He moves all over the place, like Michael Nunn. This sport's dying on its feet. Too many people are adopting safety-first tactics. True fighters are a dying breed."

Benn hopes he is making some inroads toward eliminating the belief of many American fans that the description *British fighter* is an oxymoron. Now, if he can only do something about the fans back home in England, too, many of whom think he is just a regular moron.

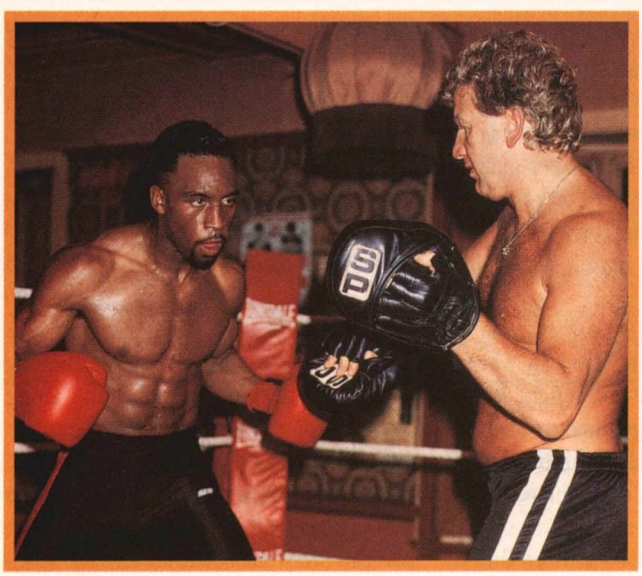
"Here, he's not seen as a lovable figure at all," says Harry Mullan, the editor of Britain's *Boxing News*. "Too often he's photographed doing things like taking delivery of a car that cost £90,000 pounds [about $150,000 in American money]. He's not someone people identify with easily. He's not the cuddly-bear figure Frank Bruno is. He's flashy and arrogant, very much in the Lloyd Honeyghan mold."

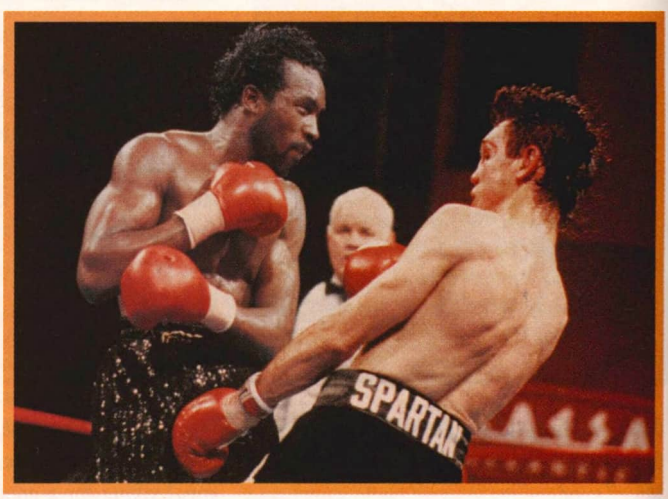
"Don't ever talk to me about Honeyghan," snaps Benn. "I'm never going to abuse what I've got. When you're up there, you're a role model. Lots of kids store their hopes and ambitions in you. Lloyd gave nothing back to those people."

Benn is heavily involved in charity work, and is especially proud of the friendship he has developed with Timmy Mapother, a young boy with cerebral palsy. Benn flies the youngster to his bouts, and talks to him on the phone constantly, even though Mapother is unable to speak clearly. Benn is angry that his Bentley Turbo and Porsche 911 convertible get more attention than his attempts to interact with his fans, but he thinks he knows why.

"I'm a young guy with a lot of money," he says. "You get one shot at life, and I want to try and enjoy some things. The critics say I'm flashy only because I come from the working class. If I had blond hair and blue eyes and came from an upwardly mobile family, what would be said about my lifestyle and income? Zilch."

Benn grew up in East London, an area, he tells an American reporter, that "makes your Bronx look like a nursery. I wasn't born with





After the Watson defeat, Benn split from British trainer Brian Lynch (left) and quickly got back on the winning track with his eighth-round kayo of veteran contender Doug DeWitt (above).

a silver spoon in my mouth, not even a wooden one. Maybe one of those plastic ones from the local Acme."

When he was 17, Benn joined the army, and the subsequent five years he spent in the service included an 18-month tour of duty in Northern Ireland.

It was in the army that Benn learned how to box. He refuses to discuss those days except to say that the ease with which he could have been killed on the streets of Belfast taught him to never worry about pleasing anyone but himself.

"If you're from the streets, you won't get jealous of me," he says. "The kids on the street tell me, 'You inspire me.' They are my people. I don't care what anyone else says. I've got no academic qualifications, but I have a degree in street credibility."

Benn is right when he says he can walk the streets proudly. What he can't always do is walk them safely. Last year, after a bicyclist was shot in London, witnesses told police that the alleged gunman strongly resembled Benn. Scotland Yard then made the foolish decision to use a retouched photo of the fighter as a sketch of the fugitive.

The day the picture was printed in *The Evening Standard*, Benn was involved in 16 incidents of frantic passersby stopping him on the street. One man, attempting to make a citizen's arrest, jumped Benn and wrestled him to the ground. The fighter injured the knuckles on his right hand punching the man in the head. Benn's lawsuit against the police was settled out of court, resulting, he says, in a "substantial amount of money."

This past March, at a marketplace in East London, a man walked up and squirted ammonia in Benn's eyes. Fortunately, a medical team that worked across the street came rushing out of their building and attended to him before he was taken to a hospital. Though Benn suffered from dilated pupils for three weeks, he suffered no permanent damage.

As risky as Benn's style may be, the ring may be the one place that he feels the safest, though it's still far from being a place where he feels content. Contentment will come in the form of a bout with one of the middleweight division's elite, all of whom have been mentioned as possible Benn foes. Naturally, Benn prefers Sugar Ray Leonard "in a ring that's six-foot-by-six-foot," but he'll settle for Thomas Hearns. As for Michael Nunn ... well ...

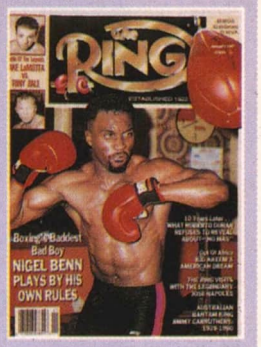
"Nunn is boring," Benn says. "He cheats the public. I'll never be a champion who runs around the ring. I couldn't live with that. People talk about me fighting Nunn. There'd have to be a penalty clause in the contract that makes him stand and fight for a few seconds every round. I don't want to chase him while he moonwalks."

If that penalty clause becomes a sticking point in negotiations, Benn might want to consider a clash with fellow Englishman Chris Eubank, a showdown that has been proposed for the home soil. If he does, though, Benn will first have to do a little something about straightening out this nasty mess he's gotten into with the British Boxing Board of Control.

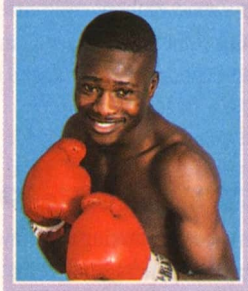
Angry that the Board wouldn't sanction Benn-Barkley in England because Barkley had previously undergone surgery for a detached retina, Benn decided to react the way he does best: emotionally. During a postfight interview with Britain's ITV, Benn produced his BBBC license, held it up to the camera, and tore it into pieces.

Having already proven his toughness in the ring, is Benn now trying to convince us of how tough he is on paper? ■

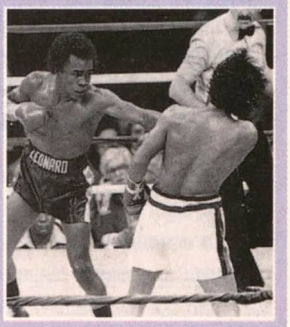
THE RING, January 1991



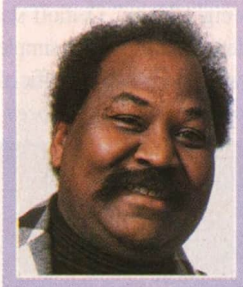
***The Cover*:** Nigel Benn may have been too flashy for some Britons, but one thing was certain about the middleweight: He was among boxing's most exciting fighters in the early-1990s. In his first-round kayo of Iran Barkley, Benn scored three knockdowns in less than three minutes.



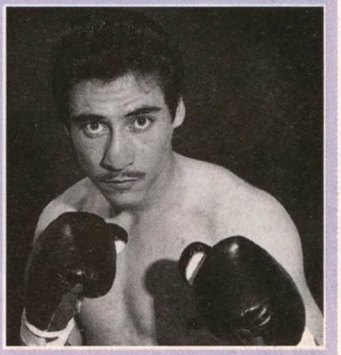
***Kid Akeem's American Dream*:** Nigerian Kid Akeem was making headway in the early-1990s, with dreams of one day becoming a five-division world champion. He had his sights set on IBF junior bantamweight titlist Robert Quiroga, who would go on to end Akeem's career during a fight in June '91.



***No Mas Revisited And Revealed*:** Roberto Duran used cramps as his excuse for his infamous "no mas" surrender against Sugar Ray Leonard in New Orleans, but the truth was that Leonard was a different and better fighter than what Duran saw in their first meeting. Ten years later, Duran still refused to acknowledge that reality.



***Reflections Of Jose Napoles*:** The 50-year-old legend was packing on the pounds since his heyday as the welterweight king in 1969. Napoles had left a wife and child behind to escape the ban on professional sports in Cuba, and became welterweight champion for the better part of six years, from '69 to '75.



***Fighter Of The Month*:** Loreto Garza earned the honor by defeating Juan Coggi for the WBA junior welterweight belt. Garza took the fight on two weeks notice, yet kept Coggi at a safe distance with a sharp jab. Garza, who controlled the fight from the start, won by dubiously close scores of 116-115, 116-114, and 115-115.

COME OUT WRITING

Letters may be edited for reasons of space and clarity. Send your comments to Come Out Writing, The Ring, P.O. Box 1148, Fort Washington, PA 19034. Or e-mail letters to comeoutwriting@yahoo.com. E-mailed letters will include the writer's e-mail address unless a city and state of origin is provided.

TARNISHING AN IDOL

For the last 19 years, Evander Holyfield has given his heart, spirit, and life to revive the fight game. So why does his career have to end at the hands of Roy Jones? Unfortunately, the final loss will be this great warrior's most embarrassing defeat. Didn't anyone learn from what happened to the aged Ali? I will not watch this fight or any other Commander Vander scraps in the future. He proved himself a champion long ago, and I cannot bear witness to the further tarnishing of his image.

SARAH LEONARD
Philadelphia, PA

DETTLOFF: PRO & CON

I have been a boxing fan now for about 20 years and it is sometimes hard to find any news in the smaller newspapers, and sometimes even the larger ones have no boxing news to speak of. I just wanted to say that THE RING is it for me, but not just for the news. I am speaking about the writers employed by THE RING. For example, while reading the "THE RING Unscrambles the Heavyweight Mess" by William Dettloff in the August 2003 issue, I found myself laughing openly. Never in a sports magazine have I been truly entertained by such wittiness.

We boxing fans should thank each and every one of you guys at THE RING for doing your jobs so well. Tyson sending strippers into Tua's corner and other great lines is what keeps me coming back. There is nothing wrong with telling the truth and making us laugh at the same time. That's what I call very entertaining writing. Thank you.

ALLEN BRASWELL
Swainsboro, GA

I am writing in response to William Dettloff's article entitled "THE RING Unscrambles The Heavyweight Mess." Dettloff states that Kirk Johnson has a ticker "less reliable then Dick Cheney's." I take offense to this for the simple fact that Kirk Johnson was, in my opinion, ahead of John Ruiz, regardless of what the American officials had it.

Also, Ruiz should have been given an Academy Award for his performance. Johnson did hit low on more then one occasion, but the fact that Ruiz would drop as if David Tua hit him, after being hit in the thigh, is simply pathetic. Ruiz knew he was outclassed, and used whatever method he could to escape with that bogus belt. I live in Canada and would understand people saying that I am just backing a guy from the country I live in. But I was born in Ireland and simply back Johnson because he is an all around solid heavyweight.

IAN KEOGH
Dundas, Ontario

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

A left from John Ruiz jerks Evander Holyfield's head back during their March 2001 bout that Ruiz won via decision. Reader Sarah Leonard is upset that "The Real Deal" is fighting Roy Jones, a match that she feels will further taint Holyfield's sagging image.

JONES JOUSTING

In the August 2003 issue of THE RING, Bobby Davis contributed his disgustingly inaccurate opinion of pound-for-pound king Roy Jones in "Come Out Writing." He stated that Jones' last few opponents, Glen Kelly, Clinton Woods, and John Ruiz, were slow and clumsy. No argument there, but the fact is both Kelly and Woods were

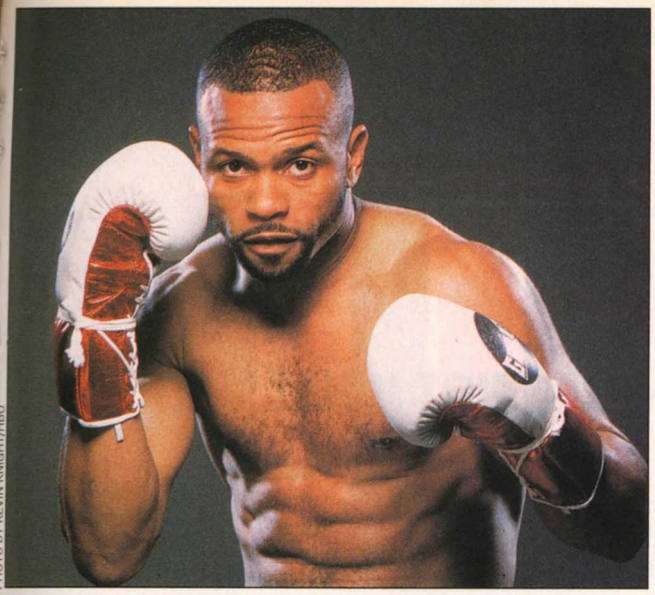


PHOTO BY KEVIN KNIGHT/HBO

Hardly a month goes by without THE RING receiving a number of letters regarding Roy Jones. This issue readers Gavin Huber and Arnold Gains chime in with opinions and questions about boxing's pound-for-pound king.

mandatory challengers. Roy has dedicated his whole life to being the champ, so forgive him for defending the belts he worked tirelessly to obtain. Moreover, what Jones did against Ruiz was a beautiful display of the Sweet Science.

GAVIN HUBER
Ft. Myers, FL

WHERE'S ROY?

In your "Alphabet Ratings" section of the August issue, you still have John Ruiz as the WBA heavyweight champ. If I'm not mistaken, didn't Roy Jones demolish him recently? Also, nowhere was Roy Jones listed as a heavyweight champ or a top contender. What gives?

ARNOLD GAINS
hymanrose@yahoo.com

[Editor's note: On closer inspection, you will notice that the WBA Ratings were dated "as of January 2003," which was prior to Jones defeating Ruiz on March 1. We publish the most recent ratings available from the various alphabet organizations, but the WBA is frequently late. Had you checked "THE RING Ratings" in the same issue, you would have seen Jones listed as both the number-three heavyweight contender and the light heavyweight champion.]

BRIT BOOSTER

I couldn't believe it when I saw Sven Ottke was "Fighter Of The Month" in the August issue? I would rather watch paint dry than an Ottke fight, unless he finds the guts to get it on with Joe Calzaghe, who would knock him out in six rounds. Let's get some Brits in "Fighter Of The Month," fighters such as Scott Harrison and Ricky Hatton.

MATT TAYLOR
matthew@mjtboxer.freeserve.com

GIVE CHRIS CREDIT

I have to second Doveed Linder's comments in the August issue of "Come Out Writing" regarding Chris Byrd. He should be on the pound-for-pound list. Unlike Lennox Lewis, Byrd fought *both* Klitschkos. Unlike Roy Jones, he'll fight anyone. Unlike Jones, he has some class and doesn't goof around in the ring or talk about himself in the third person. True, Byrd doesn't deliver devastating knockout punches, but neither does Jones or Floyd Mayweather, both of whom are on THE RING's pound-for-pound list. Byrd has heart, skill, speed, intelligence, and humility, but no fear. Those are pound-for-pound qualities, qualities that few other fighters possess in such quantity as Byrd.

GREG AUTON
Halifax, Nova Scotia

IN DEFENSE OF WILLARD

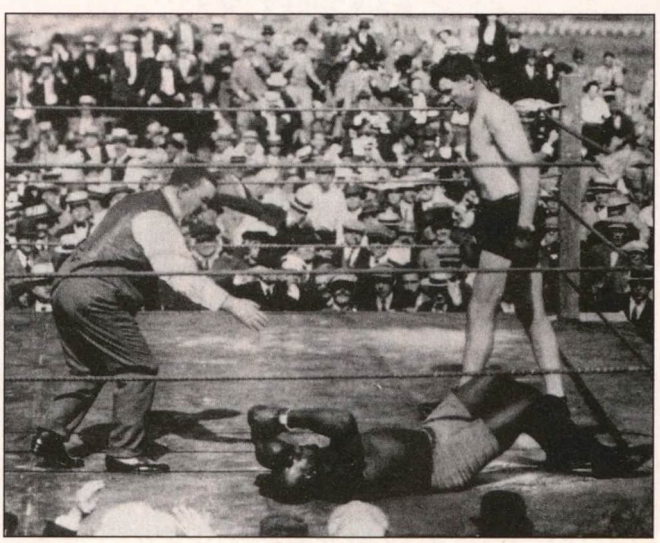
When ranking Jack Johnson among the greats of the past, most take the low road and excuse his loss to Jess Willard as a fixed fight. They offer this as a reason a great champion could possibly lose to such a big, slow moving, clumsy oaf.

Willard has been shortchanged in boxing history. He has been robbed of the biggest win of his career and put in the same clump as Primo Carnera. Fight reports from that time, however, do not support Johnson's claim the fight was a fix. Among those who were in attendance was THE RING founder Nat Fleischer, who never swayed from his opinion the fight was on the level.

There are facts that do not corroborate with the theory that the fight was a fix: The bout lasted 26 rounds, longer than any other heavyweight title fight of the gloved era. At 205, Johnson was 15 pounds lighter than in his previous defense and was in the best shape he had been in years. No one involved with the fight at any level backed Johnson's story of a fix.

Willard's fights leading up to his fight with Johnson (vs. Carl Morris, Boer Rodel, Arthur Pelkey, etc.) prove he was a legit top contender and a serious title threat. The 37-year-old Johnson did not throw the fight; he just lost to a man younger, bigger, stronger, and better prepared. At that stage in his career, Willard was too much for him. It is as simple as that.

RYAN LAPADAT
Guelph, Ontario ■



Jess Willard stands over defending champion Jack Johnson after knocking him down in the 26th round of their 1915 heavyweight title bout. Reader Ryan Lapadat believes that many historians have robbed Willard of his greatest victory by insisting Johnson took a dive.

LOOKING AHEAD

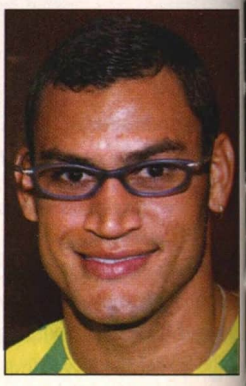
By Eric Raskin

THE "POPO" PLAN—IT'S NOT WHAT YOU THINK

As summer neared, the Internet was abuzz with rumors of an **Acelino "Popo" Freitas-Joel Casamayor** rematch for the vacant RING junior lightweight championship. But that's all they were—rumors.

"What you're reading on the Internet is all B.S.," Freitas promoter **Art Pelullo** told THE RING. "We have had absolutely no conversation with Casamayor. All I've said is that Casamayor (the WBA and WBO mandatory challenger) has stepped aside to allow Freitas to fight **Jorge Barrios**. But there is absolutely no truth to any agreement to fight Casamayor after that."

Instead, Pelullo said, Freitas is hoping to fight either featherweight star **Erik Morales** upon "El Terrible's" arrival in the 130-pound division, or junior welterweight champion **Kostya Tszyu** in a two-division leap for Popo. Both fights would provide Freitas with more money than a Casamayor rematch, although by the same token, Morales and Tszyu both have several other options they may consider more worthwhile than fighting the heavy-handed Brazilian.



Freitas: What comes after Barrios?

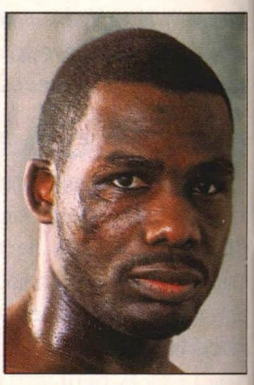
But first things first: On August 9, in a Showtime broadcast from the American Airlines Arena in Miami, Florida, Freitas will take on Argentine fighter Barrios, who boasts a 39-1-1 (29) record, but hasn't fought many guys you've heard of. Pelullo is confident that in Miami, where there are sizable Brazilian and Argentine populations, Freitas-Barrios will sell big.

"It's a real fight," Pelullo said. "Freitas wants to fight him because of the natural rivalry between Brazilians and Argentines. I'm telling you, we'll sell 15,000 tickets."

If so, certainly Pelullo could expect enormous numbers in Miami for a rematch with Cuba's Casamayor (who, in the meantime, is scheduled for an off-TV tune-up fight on September 20 in Geneva, Switzerland). But first Freitas-Casamayor II has to be negotiated and signed, and so far, neither has happened.

LISTEN UP

Freitas-Barrios will be up against some stiff competition on August 9, going head to head with the **James Toney-Bernard Hopkins** pay-per-view showdown. As of press time, it looked like the Toney-Hopkins undercard would include **Hasim Rahman** vs. a top-30-type heavyweight, and a middleweight bout between top contenders **William Joppy** and **Robert Allen** (with the winner in line for a possible shot at Hopkins) ... A bout between two of the hardest punching heavyweights in the world, **Corrie Sanders** and **David Tua**, is being seriously discussed for October. The plan calls for Tua to headline a card in Sanders' native South Africa on August 21, with Sanders topping the bill at the same venue the following night. Sanders may be stripped of the WBO belt if he faces Tua, but HBO has made it clear that they're interested in the fight regardless of whether Sanders comes in with an alphabet trinket ... Speaking of the big boys, promoter **Lou DiBella's** August 16 up-and-coming heavyweights show at Mohegan Sun in Connecticut was coming together as of press time. DiBella had proposed three bouts to HBO, and was awaiting approval and a decision on which two the network would like to televise live. The three possibilities are **DaVarryl Williamson** vs. **Sergei Lyakhovich**, **Attila Levin** vs. **Duncan Dokiwari**, and a battle of unbeatens between former cruiserweight king **Juan Carlos Gomez** and prospect **Samuel Peter** ... Bantamweight titlist **Veerapol Sahaprom** will look to clean up the only blemish of his five-year-long reign when he takes on **Toshiaki Nishioka** in Tokyo in September. The two gladiators fought to a 12-round draw in September '01 in Yokohama ... HBO announced in June that the HBO Latino program *Boxeo De Oro* has been renewed for 2004—guaranteeing that it will at least have a longer life than *KO Nation* did. ■



Rahman: Topping the Toney-Hopkins undercard

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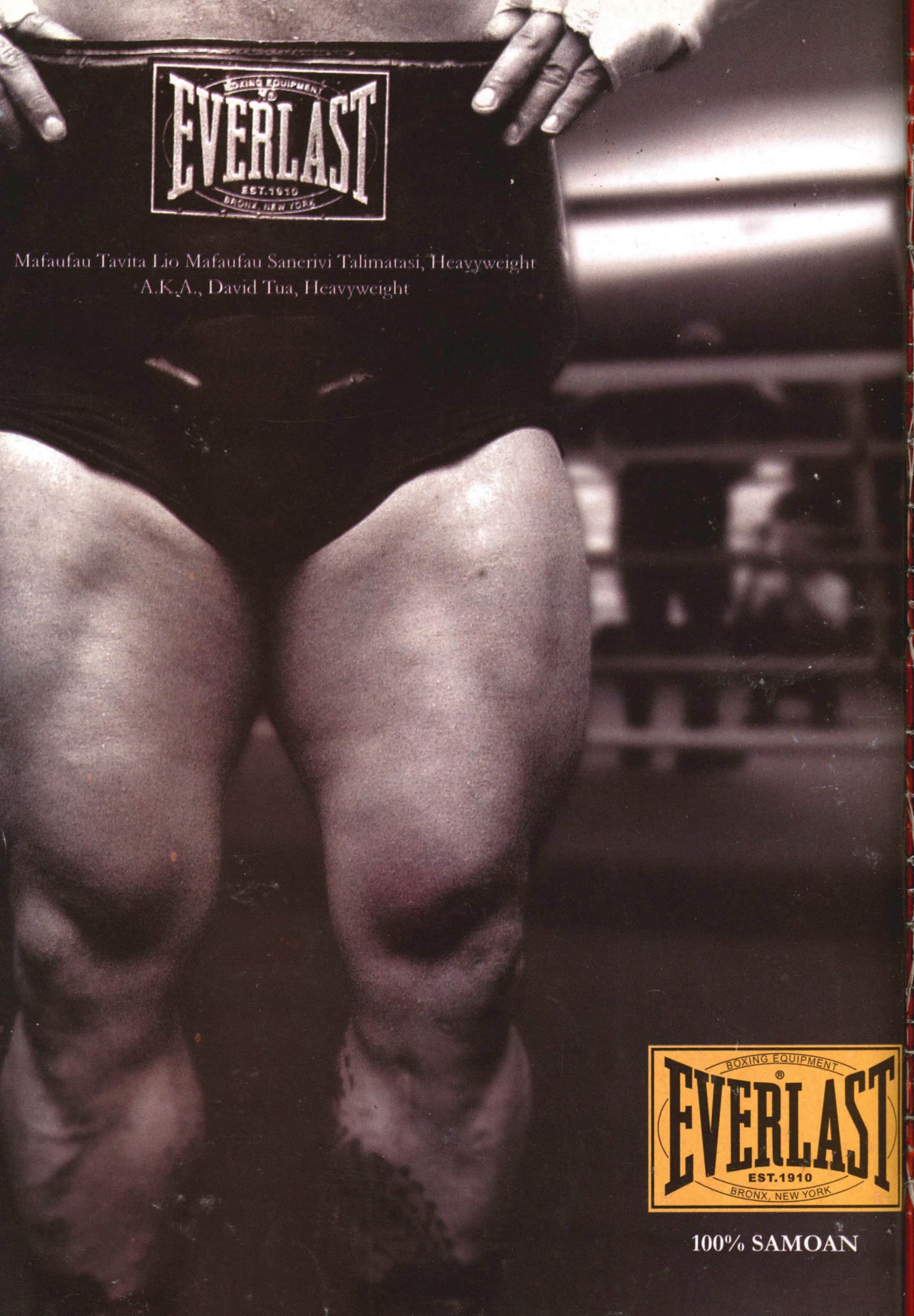

Mafaufau Tavita Lio Mafaufau Sanerivi Talimatasi, Heavyweight
A.K.A., David Tua, Heavyweight

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